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March 1991

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**Are Video Games
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AND TIPS:**

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Veigues Tactical Gladiator,
Part I**



**Mattel's
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Part II**





The Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles Have Mutated Again.



Strong new enemies like Tora the Polar Beast will frost your shell.



Only this time it's no accident. As Ultra® transforms your favorite arcade game into a hard hitting new adventure for the Nintendo Entertainment System®.

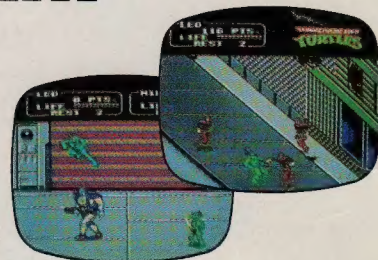
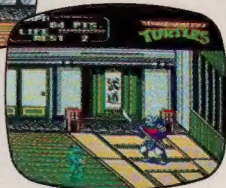
With eight original arcade levels, plus two never before seen shell squashing stages and a ton of new enemies, Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles® II — The Arcade Game™ is unlike any sewer war the turtles have ever fought in.

Fortunately two can play at this game, double teaming Shredder's 700 Foot Soldiers who will fight you every step of the way — from the Central Park Snow Route to the stone cold Rock 'N Roll Quarry. Of course to crush invincible enemies like Tora and Shogun, you must master radical new attack moves which Splinter has programmed into the game.

So grab the adventure that's hotter than a radioactive meltdown. But be warned. You might turn green, grow a shell and suddenly start craving jumbo pizzas with extra pepperonis.



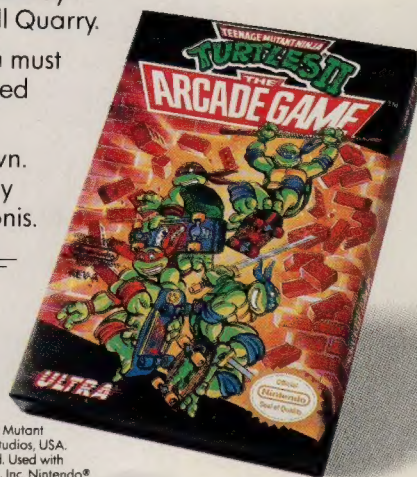
In the never before seen Ninja Castle, you'd be wise to choose a partner before you pick a fight.



Radical new attack moves really punch up the arcade-style graphics.



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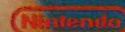
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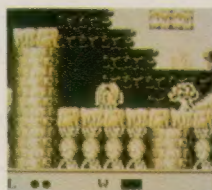
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Boy! Enchantment and excitement await you in Gargoyles Quest.

Prepare to do battle as Firebrand, the last Guardian Gargoyle of the Ghoul Realm. You must act quickly to defend your world against an invading army of



Destroyers. Fight your way through enemy forces to reach the dimensional portal that leads to your home world. Once there, the true nature of the quest begins.

The King of the Ghoul Realm has been kidnapped and it's up to you to save him. Blast the attackers with fiery breath as you fly through their defenses. Unravel the mysteries of this multilevel universe to succeed in conquering the Destroyers and freeing the captive King.



• Highly-detailed artwork sets new standards for the Game Boy!

- Advanced playability, highlighted with 360 degree scrolling.
- Hours of entertainment await you in this diverse adventure.



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Most computer games are designed to spark your imagination. Theme Park Mystery™ is designed to totally fry it!

The insanity begins when your uncle mysteriously loses his mind and you inherit his Magic Canyon Theme Park. From the moment you step through the gates of your estate in search of clues to solve the maddening mystery, you'll experience a twisted journey that will take you beyond your wildest dreams.

Four strange worlds make up the park. But unlike your average lands of amusement, where friendly characters make kids laugh with glee, the gremlins in Magic Canyon's Dragonland, Dreamland, Futureland and Yesterdayland will make you laugh all the way to the asylum.

To enter each warped world you'll board the Monorail of Fear and travel into dimensions that will enlighten you, terrorize you, confound you and challenge you.

In Dragonland, you'll be transformed into a barbaric warrior who must destroy a barrage of sinister evils, such as psycho birds, mad apes and a crazed Jack in the Box. In Dreamland, you'll doze off into a world of surreal creatures engaged in a nightmarish chess game where you're the pawn.

When Futureland comes to pass, you'll find yourself strapped in the Rollercreeper, a spine tingling, ghoulish infested ride more frightening than any rollercoaster ever built.



And on your return trip to Yesterdayland, you'll encounter the keeper of your destiny—Zoltan, who will dispense valuable clues, essential tickets and life saving magic.

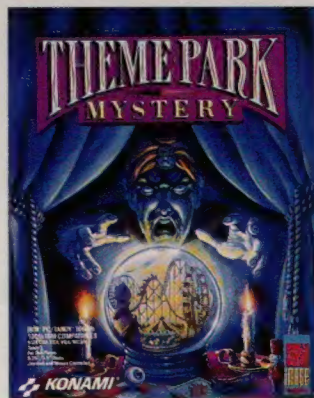
Throughout the mystery, you'll also be tested by games of chance, like Bagatelle and the Grabber. Each of these ancient gambling devices will force you to execute supreme strategy. Of course, if you fail to locate secret keys, spare parts for rides and supernatural potions which are hidden throughout the park, all the luck in the world won't save you.

So add Theme Park Mystery to your agenda of must visit hot spots. But be prepared for a long stay. Because it's a game that will drive you to the brink. And from there, there's no return.

Theme Park Mystery is available for MS DOS and Amiga®. Its highly detailed and complex graphics support CGA, EGA, MCGA/VGA and Tandy 16 color.

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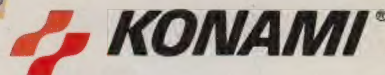
Inside every box look for a scratch card that could make you an instant winner, reimbursing you for the price of the Theme Park Mystery game. This can be used to partially pay your psychiatrist!



No purchase necessary. See package for details. All winning game cards must be received by January 15, 1992. Valid in USA and Canada (except Quebec). Void where prohibited.

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Cover: NEC's *Veigues Tactical Gladiator* (for the TurboGrafx-16) features a glimpse of robotic combat in the future. The first part of our strategy guide, on page 72, carefully guides you through this challenging TurboChip.

Cover Art: Alan Hunter

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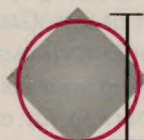
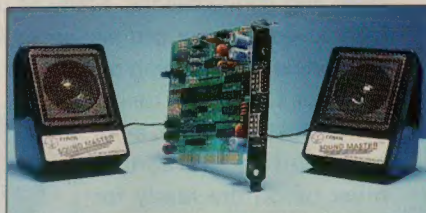
by Donn Nauert

Our ace card killer takes apart the final rooms in Mattel's bizarre modernization of the classic Breakout

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LET THERE BE SOUND!

Serious computer gamers consider a sound board standard equipment. We'll show the high points of each audio enhancer to make shopping easier.



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by Frank Tetro, Jr. and Derek Godat

If you're having trouble finding the light at the end of the tunnel in ThunderStrike and Stryx, our panel of experts will help you.

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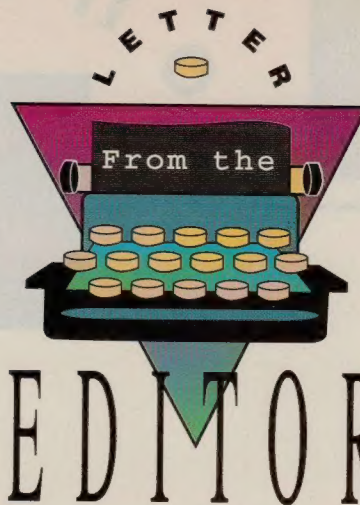
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every once in a while, I get some inspiration from the world around me. This month, I'd like to address something that has little to do with electronic games, but plenty to do with all of us.

Operation Desert Shield has become the leading topic in news-casts and conversations. Many of us have loved ones or acquaintances in the Middle East, helping prepare for a conflict that may never come. Just the same, all of our military personnel must be on the ready for whatever may spring up.

The staff of VIDEOGAMES & COMPUTER ENTERTAINMENT is completing this issue before departing for our separate Christmas locations. As I write, the hostages being held by Saddam Hussein are getting ready for their freedom, and their families are hoping to get the best present they can hope for: the safe return of their relatives.

The ones who aren't so lucky are the servicemen still stationed over there, who missed the snow, egg nog, mistletoe and presents of the home front. Their kin not only pray that no shots will be fired over the capture of Kuwait, but also that these brave soldiers will be able to return home soon.

A local radio station here in Southern California has been keeping in touch with the troops, thanks to a local serviceman who was shipped to Saudi Arabia shortly after the U.S. started sending forces overseas. His phone calls speak of the endless

boredom of the desert.

Of all the things the lonely soldiers ask for—beyond the obvious return to the States—the biggest request is letters. Any kind of mail at all. In fact, we've received correspondence from the Middle East from some soldiers who are getting issues of VG&CE forwarded to them. Of course, they are still interested in getting gaming news from home.

And that's where you come in.

Do you have a few minutes you can spare? Do you throw out your issue of VG&CE (or any other magazine for that matter) after you read it? Do you publish

a fanzine? If the answer to any of these questions is yes, there are a bunch of needy soldiers who are anxious to have some contact with anyone who wishes it.

If you have something you want to send to an Army, Air Force or Marine member, address it to

Any Service Member

Operation Desert Shield

APO New York, NY 09848-0006

The address for ship-based Navy or Marine personnel is

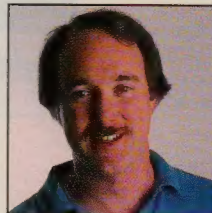
Any Service Member

Operation Desert Shield

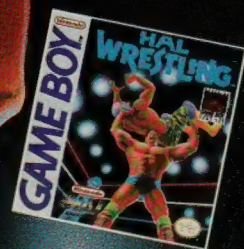
FPO New York, NY 09866-0006

VG&CE will be sending issues of the magazine overseas also, but we ask for your support in this time of need. It doesn't take much to brighten someone else's day. Thanks.

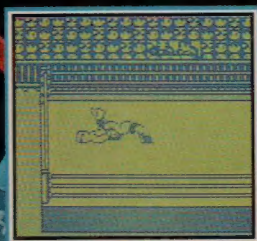
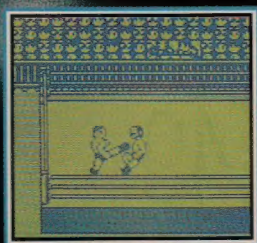
—Andy Eddy, Executive Editor



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ARCADE

1



AEROBLASTER

2



BLOODY WOLF

3



DRAGON SPIRIT

4



FINAL LAP TWIN

9



SPACE HARRIER

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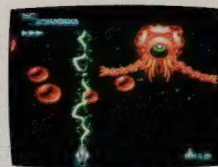
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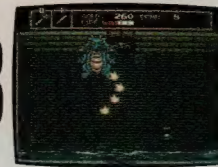
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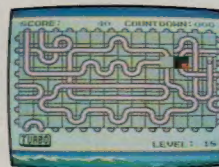
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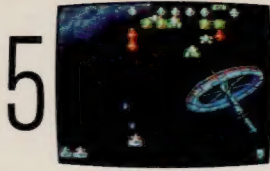
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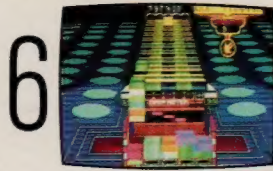


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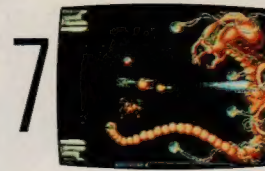
WHEN YOU'VE GOT THEM OUTNUMBERED.



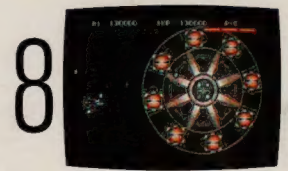
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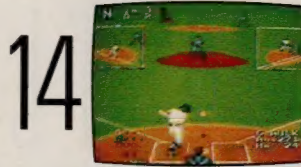
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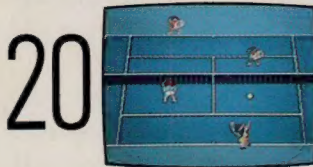
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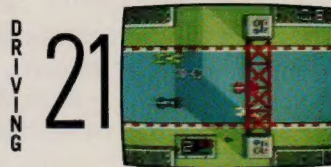
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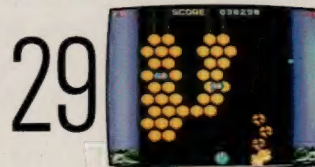
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DEVIL'S CRUSH



DRAGON'S CURSE



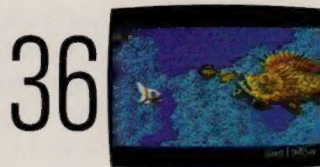
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J.J. AND JEFF



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DEEP BLUE



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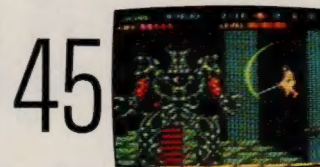
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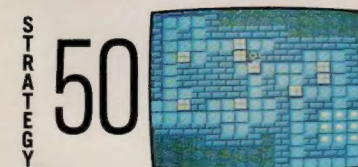
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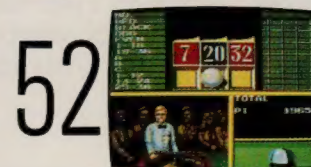
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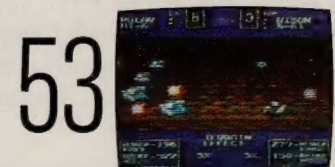
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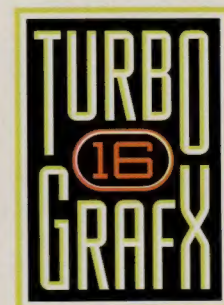
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LAST ALERT-CD



MAGICAL DINOSAUR TOUR-CD



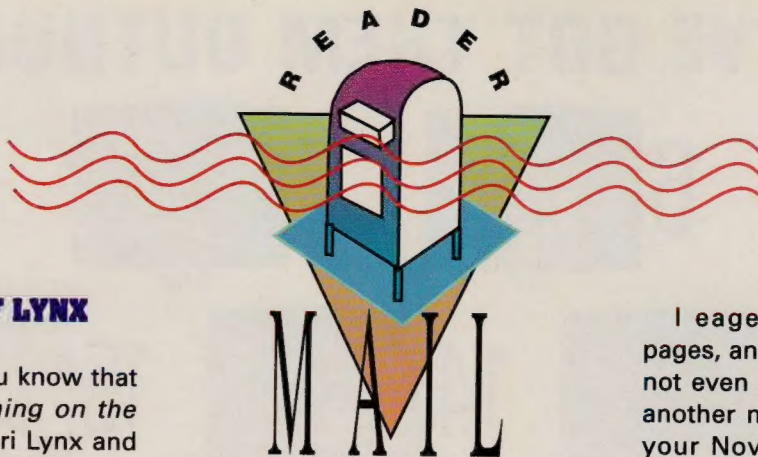
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CIRCLE #105 ON READER SERVICE CARD.



FOR THE LOVE OF LYNX

Dear VG&CE:

I just wanted to let you know that I really enjoy your *Gaming on the Go* section. I own an Atari Lynx and believe it is the best handheld on the market. Now that the new Lynx cartridges are arriving, it should only increase in popularity.

I hope to see more Lynx coverage in your magazine. By the way, thank you for a great magazine. It is the best on the market.

—Jeff Kramer
Pembroke Pines, Florida

Thanks for the compliments, Jeff. We'll have more Lynx coverage as we receive more games from Atari and its third-party developers.

Tokai Inc. had intended to sell the Light Boy and the waist bag together, the waist bag was not licensed by Nintendo. As a result, we have not been able to sell these two products together. Secondly, you listed our phone number incorrectly. The correct number is (213) 326-8880.

—Tasha Billawala
Marketing, Vic Tokai Inc.
Torrance, California

Our apologies for the error, Tasha. We'll try to be a little more careful in the future. Thanks for bringing it to our attention.

FROM THE OOPS DEPT.

Dear VG&CE:

In the December issue of VG&CE, your magazine listed Light Boy from Vic Tokai Inc. as part of your holiday suggestions for gamers.

Your paragraph concerning Light Boy had two errors. First, you stated that when a consumer buys a Light Boy, he or she will also receive a Light Boy waist bag. Although Vic



FUTURE SHOCK?

Dear VG&CE:

In a recent issue of another magazine, there were pictures of and other information about a Genesis CD-ROM unit, such as a price and even a U.S. release date. Although I was tempted to buy this magazine, I didn't. Instead I proceeded to buy the October issue of VG&CE.

I eagerly flipped through the pages, and, to my dismay, there was not even a mention of this. I waited another month and then purchased your November issue, and, again, there was no mention of the CD player. In fact, in the *Game Doctor* section, it said that a Genesis CD did not exist.

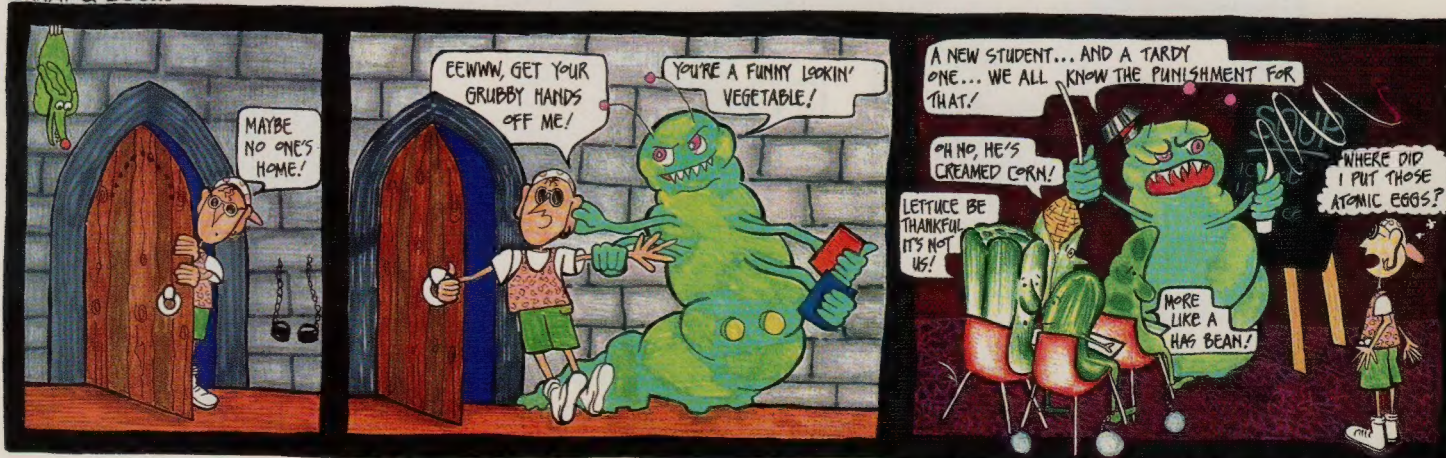
Also, in your October issue, you stated that there would be a Genesis buyer's guide plus an additional "surprise" for Genesis owners. Although I found the buyer's guide very well laid out—except there was no picture of the game *Trampoline Terror*, instead there was an additional picture of *Thunder Force II*—I did not find anything that was even somewhat of a "surprise."

Finally, in the same issue of the other magazine, there was information on the Super Famicom—game titles and news that it wouldn't be released as a separate system, but as a peripheral for the existing NES.

Don't get me wrong. I enjoy your magazine more than any other, and it is usually up to date and error-

Letters to be considered for publication should be addressed to Reader Mail, VG&CE, 9171 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 300, Beverly Hills, CA 90210. Letters may be edited for style, clarity and space considerations. We regret that we cannot respond to all mail received.

CRASH & BOOM



THE SIMPSONS™ **BART** VS. THE **SPACE MUTANTS**



Hello, fellow humans!
Bartholomew J. Simpson
here, with a big secret:

Space mutants are invading Springfield!

Yours truly is the only one who can see 'em—so it's
up to me to stop 'em. I've gotta spraypaint things, get radical on my skateboard, and in general
believe like a nuisance, man. It's a good thing I've got the rest of the Simpsons to help me out.

So if you're a decent person, a patriot, save the Earth! *Buy this game!*



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ORIG. FILE ON READER SERVICE CARD

free, but how about checking on the competition every once in a while.

—Jeremy S. Huggins
Downers Grove, Illinois

Just because we don't print the same information as our competitors, don't think we don't watch them. We give credit to our competition for what they do—but the fact remains that we are all different.

We at VG&CE don't want to cover information before it makes sense for the American audience. For example, most of the other magazines covered the Japanese release of three new machines: ShuttleGrafx, CoreGrafx and SuperGrafx. The catch is that these units are PC Engine-compatible, not TurboGrafx-16-compatible. Therefore, it's not that easy to find these products available in the U.S., and if you do, they are expensive to purchase. At this time, there are no plans by NEC to release these machines in America. For that reason, we didn't give them more than a passing mention.

Furthermore, we don't want to take up that much space espousing the virtues of the Super Famicom yet. It has only recently been confirmed, in a news article in T.W.I.C.E. magazine, that the Super Famicom would be released in America in 1991, and we haven't been able to confirm that ourselves—though it was our belief from the announcement of the product that it would appear by Christmas 1991. And there has been no confirmation as to whether the Super Famicom, which was released in Japan in November 1990, will be a separate

console or an add-on, or even what it will be called. (We opt for the name Super NES because it is a simple progression from Nintendo's previous system name.)

The same situation exists with a proposed Genesis CD-ROM system. To date, Sega hasn't announced a CD for the Genesis, though there is lots of talk for the future. As soon as we get confirmation of Sega's plans to release this device for American gamers, we'll publish a story on it. The last information we received from a Sega spokesman told us the CD-ROM player would come to our shores no sooner than 1992, when prices would be more affordable.

For all these reasons, it may appear that we are slow in getting information. That's not the case at all; in fact, we plan to have an article on the Super Famicom/NES when we have solid information to present to our readers. We don't like printing rumors, even at the risk of missing a "scoop." We'd rather print the whole story and the right story. We have a limited number of pages in which to relay gaming information, and up until now, VG&CE has had a reputation as the place to turn for error-free news. We'd like to keep it that way.

Also, regarding our November Genesis section, we're sorry you didn't find it special. We felt that 47 pages devoted to Genesis products was special, and our mail confirms it. Many gamers—both Genesis owners and others—thanked us for our extended coverage. Finally, we apologize for mixing up the pictures

in the buyer's guide and not printing a shot of Trampoline Terror.



MORE GIRL GAMES

Dear VG&CE:

I have just one question. How come no video-game system has that many girl games? There are some, but not very many. I think it would be better business if they did, because there are girls out there who would like to play too!

—Amber Pierce
Buckeye, Arizona

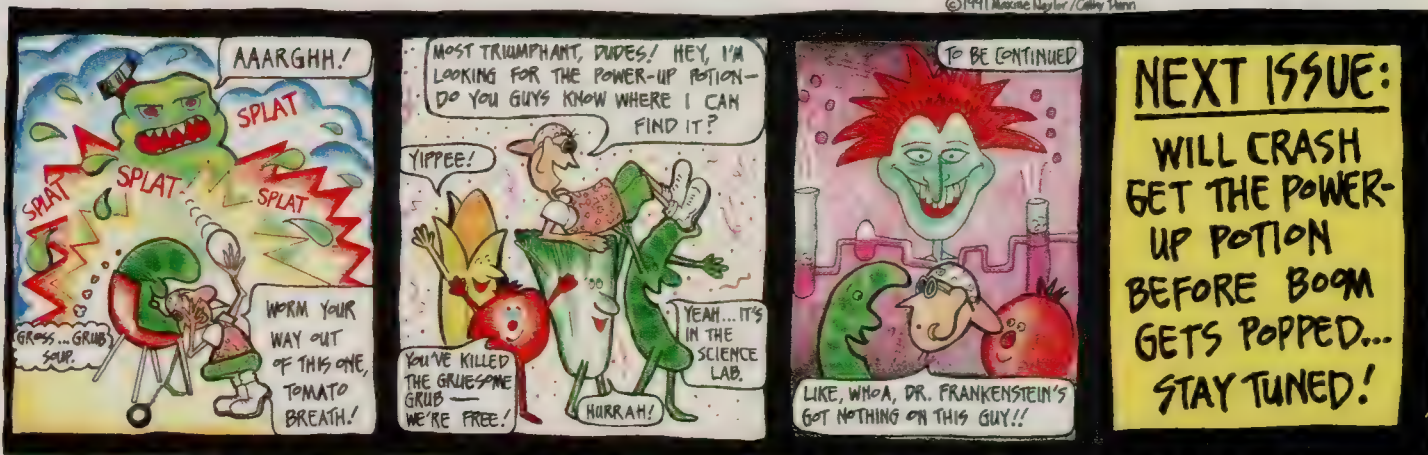
PS: I have a suggestion. I think Nintendo should make a New Kids on the Block game, where the girls chase the boys.

Well, Amber, you have some interesting ideas, but, frankly, few people seem to know what a good "girl game" is. It appears that games with less violence (non-shooters) appeal to female players, from all past studies, but few developers are going that route—sticking instead with endless martial-arts and bullet-filled contests.

The trouble, from our view, is that most video-game players are male, and therefore the game designers create games to address that majority. This creates a catch-22, where designers won't make that many products for other segments of the market, and the minority players are left to choose from mostly shooting cartridges.

By the way, Parker Brothers is working on a "New Kids" game that should hit the stores later this year. 1

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Suddenly, you're transported to a new dimension! Where only you can save a beautiful girl from her own nightmare – from her own toys that have sprung to life! Welcome to MENDEL PALACE™, a fantasy as wild as our imagination!

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Two Player Mode



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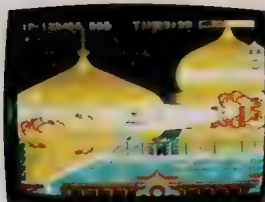
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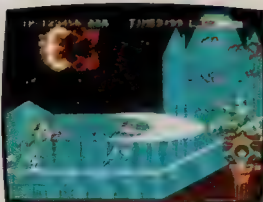
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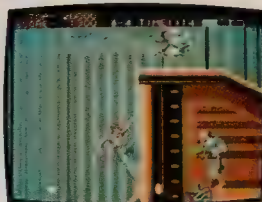
GENESIS™ DO THE FIRST AND ONLY



1. Hang gliding deep into enemy territory is just the start. Past these gleaming turrets lie frozen wastes, mechanical jungles and gigantic battleships.



2. Beware of the burly machine gunners. Unleash your laser sword. Watch for the special item to get a super sword.



3. Use your grapple hook to clamber up vertical walls, while fierce guards attack without mercy.



4. On the top of a building, climb rickety scaffolding to build your stamina. Also collect a mechanical attack bird here.



5. Collect two drones and then you get the white mechanical panther to help in your assault, as he leaps at the moon.



ES STRIDER.

8-MEG GAME EVER.



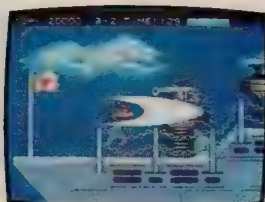
6. Mad wolves lunge at you from deep in the arctic wastes. Here you can get a friendly droid to help you battle the enemy.



7. In the midst of angled scaffolding, mechanized defenders rock on ball bearings as they try to blast you into atoms.



8. Within the forest you fling yourself onto swinging vines and meet Amazon women. Don't fall—deadly piranha fish infest the waters below.



9. Automatic cannon fire assaults you aboard the fleet cruiser of the evil empire. Soon you'll face its largest cannon—it's awesome.



10. You must face and defeat such mechanical minions of death, before you reach the inner sanctum of Number One.

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An evil Syndicate has violently overthrown Russia and is using their scientific and military might to take control of the world. You land your hang glider in an industrial town and begin your quest to defeat the evil mastermind. You use your incredible acrobatic skills as you leap onto moving platforms, climb to the top of I-beams with your grappling hook and slide with heels dug in down steep slopes while you evade razor sharp spokes.

With your only weapons, a trusty laser sword and swift hover craft, you take on mutant centipedes, ancient dinosaurs, pirates, mad dogs, monkey-like mechanical robots and finally the evil mastermind in his mechano-skeletal headquarters.

It's what happens when 8-meg power combines with the only true 16-bit system. Only on Genesis by Sega.™

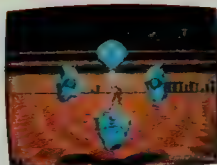


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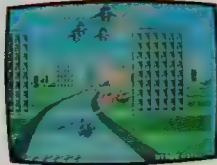
Golden Axe™



Space Harrier II™



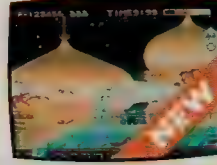
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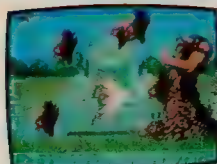
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Cyberball™



Strider™



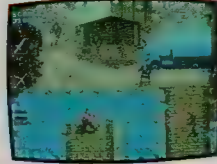
Altered Beast™



Ghouls 'n Ghosts™



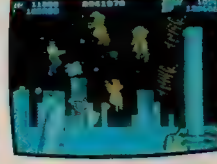
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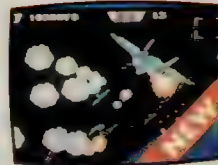
ADVENTURE GAMES:



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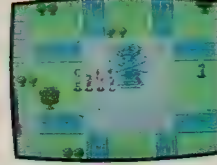
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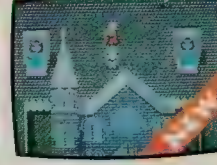
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of Vermillion™

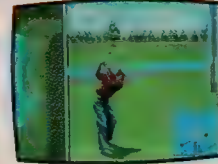
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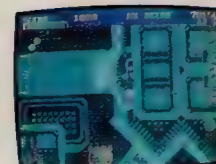


James "Buster" Douglas
Knockout Boxing™



Joe Montana Football™

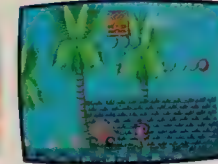
ACTION GAMES:



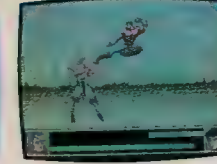
Thunder Force II™



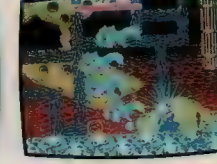
Ghostbusters II™



Alex Kidd:
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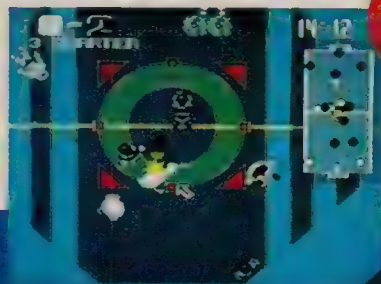
The Castle of Illusion
Starring Mickey Mouse™



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In a futuristic sports arena, you're running upfield, free and clear, when WHAM! your opponent slams into you with a bone-jarring tackle knocking the ball loose. On defense, switch control to your nearest player, then devastate the ball handler with a lightning spin kick, forcing another fumble. Now pick it up and sprint upfield. Then cut back to evade tacklers, fake the goalie, and bust through for a touchdown!

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namco

The Game Creator

Even the best player has trouble with a game now and again, but where can you turn for help? VIDEOGAMES & COMPUTER ENTERTAINMENT has designed Tip Sheet to give you, the reader, answers to questions such as "How do I defeat the end boss on this level?" or "I've looked everywhere, but I can't find the blue vase." So if you're having a problem on a game, write to us, and our group of experts will do everything they can to solve it. Send your letters to

VG&CE,
9171 Wilshire Blvd.,
Suite 300
Beverly Hills, CA
90210
Attn: Tip Sheet



by **Donn Nauert**

In the November 1989 issue there is an Easter egg that says you can become invincible in *R-Type* by pressing **Down** and **Right** on Controller 1 and **Up** and **Left** on the second controller, with the power off, then you turn the system on and when the title screen appears, press Button 1 to start the game. I've tried it a million times and it won't work. So what do I do?

—Frederick Price
Palos Verdes Estates,
California

Dear Frederick,
To become invincible in *R-Type* for the Sega Master

System (you didn't indicate which *R-Type* you had, and there is no known invincibility code for *R-Type* on the TG-16), you need to press and hold **Down** and **Right** on Controller 1 and **Up** and **Left** as well as Button 1 on Controller 2, with the power off. Then turn on the system, and when the SEGA logo appears, release all the buttons. You will now be invincible.

I am a 55-year-old NES player. Two and a half years ago my son got me hooked on video games. Now I need a tip on *Mega Man 2*. When we get to Dr. Wily's castle and go up to where the white blocks go across, there is a large fire-breathing dragon that appears. I have tried everything, but I can't get past him before he kills me. What



Try not to panic when you come across the dragon in *Mega Man 2*.

IF YOU'RE STILL PLAYING SEGA, NEC, OR NINTENDO YOU'RE NOTHING BUT A WEENIE!



IF YOU'RE PLAYING THE INCREDIBLY HIGH POWERED **NEO•GEO**® SYSTEM YOU'RE A REAL HOT DOG!



Tough talk, but think it over. Why fool around with limp, underpowered 16 bit systems when NEO•GEO® now offers the hottest, most advanced video entertainment system in the world! Fact. NEO•GEO simply out-muscles those guys with the big names. NEO•GEO features a huge 330 meg hardware setup that delivers robust 15-channel real voice stereo sound. Unmatched graphics with over 65,000 vivid colors of amazing detail! Not to mention effects with 4-dimensional realism. Does NEO•GEO cost more than other video game systems? You bet. Does a Ferrari cost more than a Yugo? Does Prime Rib cost more than squirrel burgers? With NEO•GEO you get more than you paid for.

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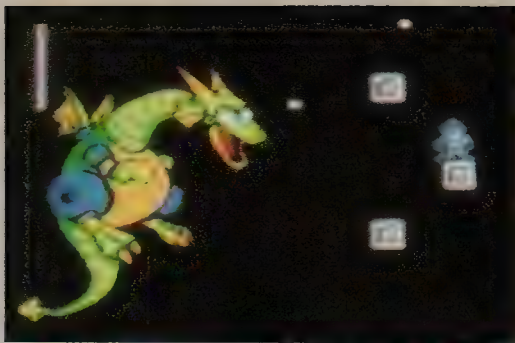
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| 4096 Simultaneous Colors displayed at one time! | NEO•GEO 4096 | |
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When the dragon starts shooting fireballs at you in Mega Man 2, move to the top block.

can I do so I can continue through the game without being killed? I would appreciate the help, because I really like the game.

—Barbara Smith
Vallejo, California

The first thing to remember is not to panic when the dragon starts to chase you. Once you are at the end of the path, get on the middle block, and shoot him in the face with regular shots. When he starts to shoot fireballs at you, move to the top block and continue shooting. He'll be defeated in no time; it'll take 14 shots.

I was reading the November issue and wondered if you could help me with a few games. First, how do you defeat the lasers on Stage 4 of *Super C*? Second, in *Wrath of the Black Manta*, how do I

defeat El Toro?

—Jerry Stovall
High Point, North
Carolina

To defeat the lasers in Stage 4, move to the right side of the screen as soon as they appear. The shots start with the right guns and move left. As the shots move left, stay very close to them so that when they start back to the right you can pass underneath while you're moving back to the right—just a process of moving from right to left, left to right and shooting the guns at the same time. One of the best weapons you can have for this end boss is a shotgun.

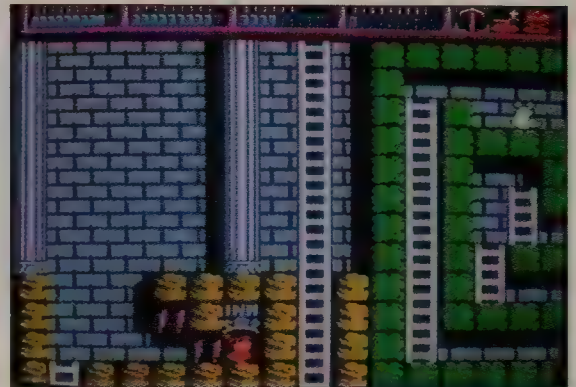
For Black Manta, you must use the four Ninpo Arts in this order: fire bomb, fire ring, spider and missile.



It is important to stay on the right side of the screen as soon as the lasers appear in Stage 4 of Super C.

Help! I own the *Legacy of the Wizard* game for my NES, and I have searched and searched for the shield, but I can't find it anywhere. I have three of the four crowns that I'm supposed to get, but I need the shield (which will deflect the shots of the big bosses) to beat the holder of the fourth crown.

—Darryl Bartlett
Paragould, Arizona



In Legacy of the Wizard, you must first find the shield in order to deflect the shots of the big bosses.

You can find the shield inside a special shop that is located four screens below the dragon. Once you make it to the dragon, use either the father, mother or daughter to move the rock in the bottom-left corner, then travel straight down for four screens.

The shop is inside a block located under the pillar on the right. After obtaining the shield, the shop will become an inn.

TROIKA

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Coming Soon
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In game designer Dima Pavlovsky delivers
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Vegas Comdex Becomes Greatest Show on Earth

Crowds at the 12th-annual COMDEX/Fall '90 astounded even the usually blasé citizens of Las Vegas. The event, held in the Nevada tourist mecca in November, had 1,850 exhibitors and 21 miles of display space. The 2.2 million square feet that filled in the various exhibit halls was an increase of 18% over last year.

Buyers, retailers, distributors and manufacturers from 21 nations attended COMDEX/Fall '90. The total attendance for the show was estimated at approximately 125,000.

"A year ago, COMDEX/Fall was proclaimed 'the largest trade show in the U.S.,'" says Sheldon G. Adelson, chairman of the Interface Group, the show's creators. "This year, we broke all records and had the greatest trade show on Earth. COMDEX has always been a barometer of the computer industry, and all indications are that all is alive and well. In fact, optimism is so high that 'record space' has already been reserved for COMDEX/Fall '91."

Titus Titles Featured in TV Flick

The forthcoming made-for-TV movie *Video Cop* has scenes that spotlight two popular computer games. The Screenplayers Company, which started production on the film last fall, is utilizing Titus Software's *Highway Patrol II* and



Fire and Forget II in the film.

Both of these games are recently introduced sequels to early Titus action hits. *Highway Patrol II* replicates the activities of a highway patrol officer in a fast-moving driving simulation with 3-D graphics. *Fire and Forget II* depicts futuristic vehicular combat.

Both games are available for Amiga and IBM PC computers, and versions for the Atari ST and Commodore 64 are under development.

Montana Reveals Gaming Love

It goes without saying that San Francisco 49er games are important to Joe Montana. His concentration and dedication have made him a Super Bowl-winning quarterback, a peren-

nial Pro Bowl participant and a shoo-in for the Hall of Fame.

What most fans of the N.F.L. don't know is that the star of *Joe Montana Football* (Sega for IBM PC, Genesis and Sega Master System) is a longtime computer enthusiast. "I started hacking about eight years ago," Joe says, "and now I'm nuts about computer games!"

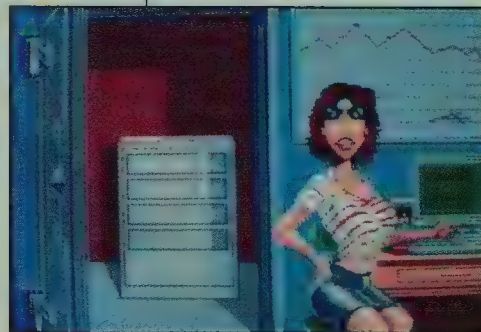
He also revealed that his interest is shared by other teammates. Said the four-time Super Bowl field general, "A lot of the guys bring computer games to football camp. We all compete against each other during the off hours. But at home, we just play against the computer..."

Big Business Has Bonus Game

The humorous strategy game of corporate management, *Big Business* (DigiTek

Software for Amiga, Atari ST, Commodore 64 and IBM PC) offers up to three players a chance to show how they could build up a manufacturing colossus. Using sensitive AI (artificial intelligence), *Big Business* is based on a detailed mathematical model of the corporate business environment.

There's a big bonus on the *Big Business* disk too. The package also includes *Wall*



Street, a realistic simulation of the stock market. This share-trading game features a portfolio database and a stock market trivia quiz.

JVC, Lucasfilm Plan Carts

Two electronic entertainment giants, LucasArts Entertainment Company and JVC Musical Industries, will join forces in the field of video games for the Nintendo Entertainment System. Lucasfilm

CATRAP™

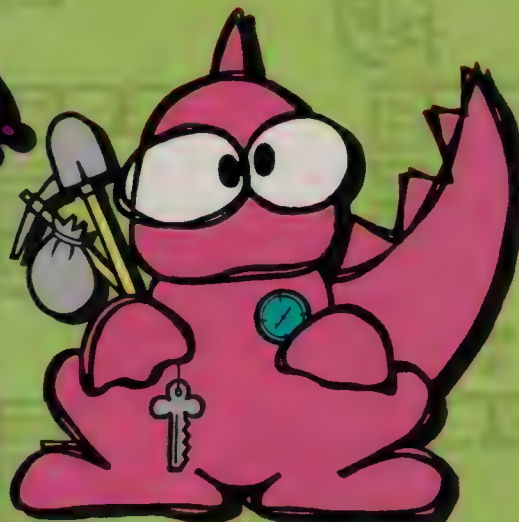


More than just a game of mind-bending intrigue and action, Catrap lets you be the architect of the underground labyrinth and make your own game of intricate mazes. With 100 challenging puzzles to solve, only you can help Catboy and Catgirl land on their feet.

- 100 challenging mazes
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BACK TO BACK

Excitement



Our cute and mighty warrior must battle his way through mutant guards to the top of the tower. Travel through 8 challenging worlds as you help Boomer search for the keys to defeat the evil Zoozoon!

Looking for great game clues, tips and secrets? Be a charter member of the Asmik Klue Klub. The first 2,500 members will receive a FREE GIFT! It's easy - just purchase any Asmik game and fill out the enclosed reply card or send in the proof of purchase to the address below.

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- Screen moves as Boomer does
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Boomer's Adventure™ ASMIK World

CIRCLE #113 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

Games, a division of LucasArts, will design, develop and market the game. JVC, an authorized Nintendo licensee since 1989, will handle sales and distribution.

Star Wars, the first title, is scheduled for release in early summer. It and subsequent cartridges will be marketed as Lucasfilm Games creations under the JVC brand name.

Lynx Line Expanded

The library of games for the Atari Lynx portable video-game system will continue to grow through 1991, according to company spokesmen. As of December, the company had already shipped over a dozen titles; more are being readied literally every week. A list of currently available titles follows.

California Games contains contests for one or two players in surfing, skateboarding, BMX dirt track racing and hacky sack.

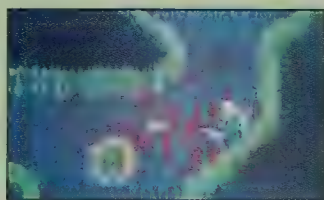


Blue Lightning is a one-person jet-simulator flying-and-shooting game with nine missions to accomplish.



Also for one player, *Chip's Challenge* (a maze exploration); *Electrocop* (rescue the President's kidnapped kin by raiding the criminal's fortress and taking control of weapons, guards and computers); and *Gates of Zendocon* (survive the web and travel through 51 universes to reach the spider).

Gauntlet, a contest for one to four players, sends the player into a fortress/castle to rescue a magical stone and save the world.



Todd's Adventure in Slime World is a set of six adventures for one to four players, starring drools, maggots, bloodflies and other Slime World creatures.

Klax is a one-person tile-stacking game, based on the coin-op of the same name.

Paperboy sends the gamer biking through neighborhoods infested with mad dogs, crazed grannies and lots of other obstacles.

Xenophobe lets one to four players clean up a space station that is infested with alien lizard-like creatures.

Robosquash is a game of ricocheting handballs.

Ms. Pac-Man lets one player control the gobbler in a classic maze chase.

Road Blasters is a hot race in an armed vehicle, based on the best-selling coin-op.

Multiple players compete in shooting 'em up in *Zarlor Mercenary* (the more you kill, the more money you'll earn to buy better weapons).



Rampage stars George the Gorilla, who runs amuck, destroying the city.

Rygar is a 23-level war against monsters and demons.

Computer Games Post Uneven Third Quarter

There's no end in sight to the sales roller coaster for computer-entertainment software. After an outstanding third quarter (April-June) 1990, sales came back down during the next three-month period. Although sales of IBM PC games did rise 2.5% compared to the same 90-day interval of 1989, the steep decline in sales of 8-bit games swamped this modest gain.

According to the quarterly report prepared by the Software Publishers Association (SPA), North American computer-entertainment software sales were \$79.1 million during the third quarter. This is about 19% less than last year's quarter.

Games Found on Most Computers

What do people do with their home computers? Research by TMR, Inc., on behalf of FujiPhoto Film U.S.A., Inc., shows that gaming is a computer activity for more than two-thirds of home-office workers.

According to the study, 68% of respondents play games on their machines. Only word processing and accounting were more frequently cited applications. It is indicative of the importance of computer entertainment that gaming is a more common activity among home-office workers than database use, telecommunications or desktop publishing.

EA, Maxell Offer Free Game

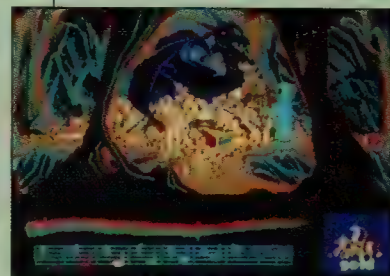
Electronic Arts and Maxell are teaming up to present a free-game giveaway for the third consecutive year. Special

ten-packs of Maxell Floppy Disks (MD2-D, MD2-HD, MFD-DD and MF2-HD) contain a unique version of *PGA Tour Golf* on a free 11th disk.

Booting this bonus disk puts the electronic duffer at the 16th hole of The Players Championship at Sawgrass, three shots behind the leader, with just three holes to play. A comeback won't be easy, because the 17th hole is a killer with water hazards in every direction. The complete retail version of *PGA Pro Tour Golf* lists for \$49.95.

Lucasfilm Goes on the Towns

Fujitsu's F.M. Towns computer, which is not yet available in the United States,



isn't escaping the notice of American software publishers. The IBM PC system, which incorporates a CD-ROM drive, is currently selling well in Japan. Although Fujitsu has announced no firm plans to bring the unit to this country, some software makers have decided to start support for the system.

The latest to announce products for the F.M. Towns is Lucasfilm Games. The first group of titles consists of *Zak McKracken and the Alien Mindbenders*, *Loom* and *Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade: The Graphic Adventure*. All three are currently available on disk for conventional computers.

Lynx Volunteers for Desert Shield

Atari Corp. has arranged to send display kiosks with Lynx color portable video-game machines and cartridges to U.S.

Full-Color
Coverage!

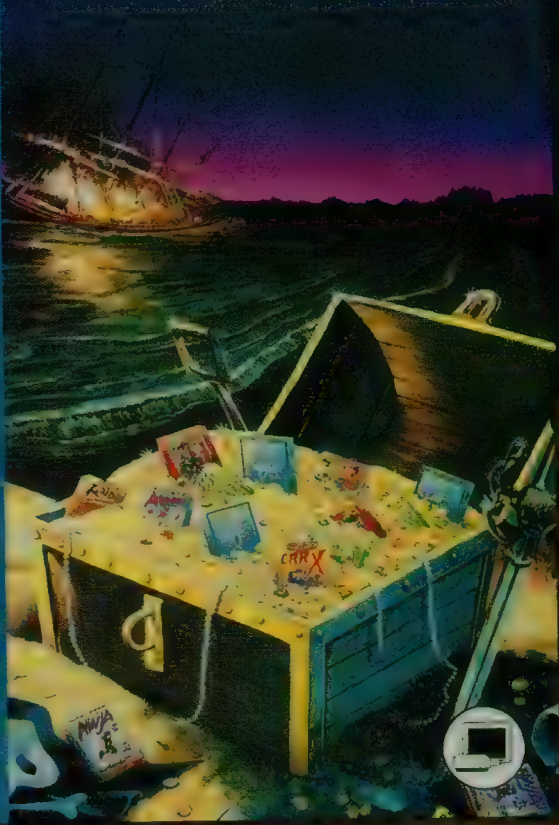
VideoGames & Computer Entertainment

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bad? Now VIDEOGAMES & COMPUTER ENTERTAINMENT and Hayden Books have put together the final word on NES games. VIDEOGAMES & COMPUTER ENTERTAINMENT's® *Complete Guide to Nintendo® Video Games* is a full-color book that offers over 200 descriptions and reviews of NES and Game Boy titles, featuring the latest cartridges from all of the NES software manufacturers like Ultra, Capcom, Electronic Arts, Acclaim, Konami and even Nintendo itself. Even "unlicensed" companies such as Tengen, American Video Entertainment and Color Dreams are covered.

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forces participating in Operation Desert Shield. By arrangement with the Defense Logistics Agency and the USO, Atari placed these game stations at military recreation centers in Saudi Arabia.

Each of the special display units contains four Lynx systems and complete libraries of cartridges. "We've packed the kiosks so they can be taken right from the palettes, plugged in and used by the men and women who are temporarily stationed in Saudi Arabia," says Meade Ames-Klein, president of the consumer-products game division. He added that the game systems reached the centers in time to brighten Christmas.

Atari Goes to the Movies

Some patrons of Cineplex Odeon Theaters got their first close-up look at the Atari Lynx color portable video game unit in December. Lynx kiosks in the lobby and ads in the three-million-circulation *Movie Magazine* were part of an Atari outreach program to spread the news about its upscale portable. Each kiosk has two Lynx systems, which play almost all of the Lynx titles.

"By placing the Lynx kiosk displays in the theaters," says Ron Beltramo, vice-president of marketing, "we give them the hands-on experience of sampling the realistic full-color display and four-channel sound that they can have as their own when they purchase the Lynx system and game cartridges."

Electronic Arts Tries Sports, Sci-Fi

The newest introductions for computer play from Electronic Arts feature a couple of hard-hitting sports titles and a duo of science fiction world builders.

Earl Weaver Baseball 2.0 is just the thing for fantasy league gamers. Players can download current stats (from online baseball stat services) to update their fantasy team. The computer opponent has new skills: better fielding, improved baserunning and a wider selection of pitches. The manager can keep up to a 40-man roster for the season. Players look more true-to-life in this new program and are larger.

Mario Andretti's Racing Challenge puts players through dirt-track racing to work up to top-quality cars. Included are sprint, modified, stock, prototype, Formula 1 and Indianapolis 500 cars. The gamer must beat Andretti's record in order to excel.

PowerMonger, ready at the end of 1990, is the latest wrinkle from Bullfrog, the U.K. group that created last year's



hit *Populous*. The new game casts the player as a deposed king and tribe leader settling an uncharted territory. The land is built of 3-D vector graphics and includes hills, plains, roads, buildings, trees, lakes, boats, waterfalls and streams. The population in this rural world is made up of fishermen, farmers, ranchers, animals and birds.

Hard Nova turns the gamer into a mercenary in the frontier system, recruiting new gangs of pilots, gunners, programmers and engineers to face and defeat an interstellar plot. A dialog system lets the player lie, cheat, flatter or threaten aliens to get information, help and favors and accept or give bribes. The combat systems include indoor fights with blasters and grenades, dogfights in hovercrafts and large-scale space warfare.

Acclaim Is Santa in Saudi Arabia

U.S. troops stationed in the Persian Gulf received an unexpected visit from "Santa" last Christmas when Acclaim Entertainment, Inc. and Boeing Helicopter's "Christmas in Saudi Arabia" volunteer program spread glee throughout the Gulf by donating 10,000 SuperPlay Hand-held video

games. Two thousand copies of *Wizards & Warriors*, *Iron Sword*, *BigFoot*, *Knight Rider* and *1943* made the long journey overseas for the troops' recreational pleasure.

"We understand that electronic games are among the items most requested by soldiers stationed in the Persian Gulf," reports Acclaim's Gregory Fischback.

"We feel the least we can do as a small token of our appreciation is provide gifts of our hand-held games to brighten their holiday season away from home."

Online Service Introduces New Game

America On-Line just added a new real-time game for play on the telecommunications service. *Puzzler* lets the online gamer create a character, personalize its looks then appear as a contestant on a *Wheel of Fortune*-style show.

In addition, *Puzzler* also permits some amusing pie-throwing between the on-screen personas, in addition to the opportunity to compete with other online players in the *Wheel of Fortune* game.

America On-Line is currently offering services for \$5 during the evening hours (\$10 during the day) to Apple PC users through modem and phone hookup.

Top Coin-Ops of November 1990

Figures courtesy of *RePlay* magazine, based on an earnings-opinion poll of operators.

Best Upright Videos

1. *Race Drivin'* by Atari
2. *Pit-Fighter* by Atari
3. *Hard Drivin'* by Atari
4. *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* by Konami
5. *G-LOC* by Sega
6. *Galaxy Force* by Sega
7. *Beast Busters* by SNK
8. *Smash TV* by Williams
9. *2-Dude Off Road* by Leland
10. *Final Lap* by Atari

Best Coin-Op Software

1. *Magic Sword* by Capcom
2. *Ninja Combat* by SNK
3. *Final Fight* by Capcom
4. *Violence Fight* by Taito
5. *WWF Superstars* by American Technos
6. *Raiden* by Fabtek
7. *Off Road Trak Pak* by Leland
8. *Baseball Stars* by SNK
9. *MVP* by Sega
10. *Magician Lord* by SNK

Best New Uprights

1. *Riding Hero* by SNK
2. *ATAXX* by Leland
3. *Top Landing* by Taito
4. *Air Inferno* by Taito
5. *Punk Shot* by Konami

Condor Flies to Tandy

Tiger Media's CD-ROM game, *Airwave Adventure: The Case of the Cautious Condor*, keeps becoming available to more gamers. The latest multimedia system added to the list of versions is the Tandy 2500XL with CD-ROM.

Condor is an interactive detective adventure in the Agatha Christie style of murder mystery. The game was first introduced for play in Japan on the F.M. Towns. It is available in the USA for play on Sun Microsystems's SPARCstations and is also scheduled for the Commodore CDTV. It uses 300 megabytes of programming, including three hours of audio and over 800 high-res images. The player/detective,

on board a luxury airliner, has 20 minutes to discover the murderer.

Tiger Media's development technology, which the company is making available to the rest of the industry, allows the company to adapt products quickly for all optical disc platforms. The company expects *Condor* and all future Tiger Media products to be made available for most successful multimedia standards.

Publisher Continues Gaming Series; Adds Titles

Bantam Electronic Publishing is continuing its commit-



ment to gaming with the publication of several new books devoted to gaming entertainment in its "Game Mastery Series." The 1991 Bantam Computer Book catalog introduced *Ultimate Sega Game Strategies for the Master & Genesis Systems*, by Corey Sandler and Tom Badgett (288 pages, \$9.95). It reviews 43 Genesis and 21 SMS titles, rates each according to subject matter, difficulty and target age and also provides tips and strategies.

The pair of authors also have a follow-up to their best-selling Nintendo strategy books. *Ultimate Unauthorized Nintendo Game Strategies, Vol. 3* (352 pages, \$9.95) contains storylines, tips, secrets, tactics and strategies for over 100 1990-91 games. It also introduces a new rating system based on graphics, sound,

response and fun. The book contains a set of discount coupons for NES game cartridges.

Sandler and Badgett also authored *The Official TurboGrafx-16 Game Encyclopedia* (288 pages, \$9.95), with detailed storylines for 46 1990 games and special previews of 1991 titles. It categorizes (by subject matter and target age level) and assigns difficulty ratings to each title, then rates each for graphics, sound, response, difficulty level and fun.

In addition, the book contains a lot of NEC news, including an introduction to the TurboExpress (handheld system) and CD-ROM and a how-to guide for assembling the TurboGrafx-16 with components.

Bantam's Game Mastery Series also added *The Authorized Uncensored Leisure Suit Larry Bedside Companion*, by Peter Spear (256 pages, \$9.95). It walks the reader through the stories of the three LSL games with step-by-step moves, reveals how to score information and provides maps for every locale and other goodies that add fun to the game. It goes beyond Sierra's traditional hint books and adds a lot of information about Larry that no fan will want to miss.

Whitestar Starts CD-ROM Projects

Whitestar Mageware's premier release, *The Golden Immortal*, marked the new entertainment company's entrance into CD-ROM. The adventure quest is said to use all of the capabilities of the media with expanded sound and graphics.


Sophisticated Santa Fe, currently being readied for

market, is for armchair travelers. It lets the gamer choose from picture icons to visit different areas of town. Among the information it holds are recommended locations to visit, restaurants, parks, recreations, cultural and sports affairs. There are other tour guide features and original musical themes for each area. It uses a system of zooms and "dynamic visuals," and windows pop up to allow the traveler to thoroughly explore the city.

Sophisticated Santa Fe, for play on IBM with VGA and CD-ROM, is the first in a series of armchair explorations planned by the New Mexico company.

New Wireless Remote Introduced

Acclaim's newest wireless remote, the Power Player, priced at \$19.95, is said to be accurate up to 30 feet, lightweight and comfortable. And, of course, it eliminates those wires that interfere with game play.

Sam Goldberg, Acclaim's vice-president of marketing remarks, "Thanks to new technology, we've been able to create an infrared peripheral at a moderate price, and by offering a completely wireless format, the Power Player adds a new dimension to the growing accessory market." 



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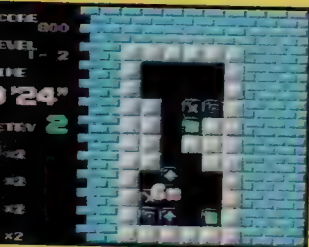
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It's the fast-paced puzzle that'll give your mind a heavy duty workout.

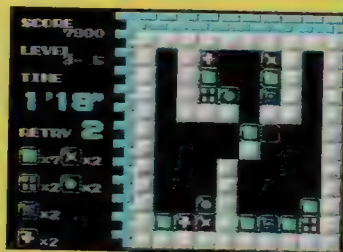
Puzznic seems easy — move and match geometric shapes to wipe out all the puzzle pieces. Trouble is, you've got to match the shapes in just the right order — or you won't blast one puzzle and get to the next. Rack up bonus points for matching multiples — if you're really fast, you can beat the clock and start some chain reaction action. And when you finish the first **160 puzzles**, the fun's not over. You also get **Gravnic™**, the *bonus game* that lets you play against gravity.

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Actual Nintendo Entertainment System® screens shown.



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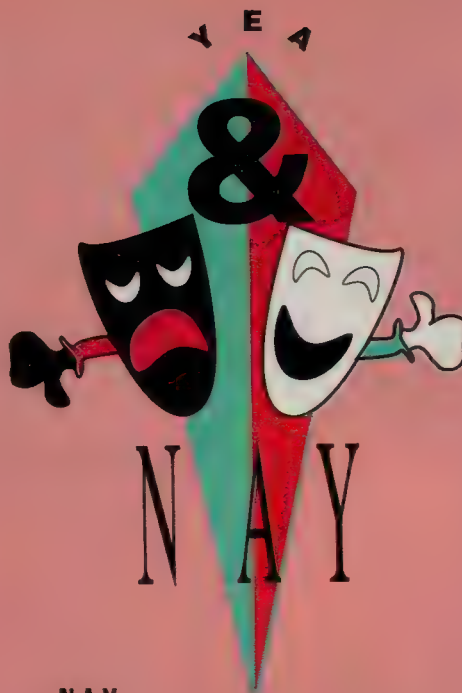
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Yea & Nay is an inside look at the high and low points in the electronic-game industry. It's an opportunity for the companies that decide what games we'll be playing to be patted on the back or slammed to the mat for what they do.

If you want to give credit where credit is due—whether the company belongs in the Hall of Fame or Hall of Shame—send your opinions to VG&CE, 9171 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 300, Beverly Hills, CA 90210, Attn: Yea & Nay. Let's hear how you feel!



NAY



Though this is an issue that's been raised in the pages of VIDEOGAMES & COMPUTER ENTERTAINMENT before, we'd like to give a thumbs down to game designers stuck in the rut of the "scroll-boss-scroll-boss" video game. In fact, upon our first viewing of the Super Famicom, it was somewhat disheartening to see that *Super Mario World* (also known as *Super Mario 4*) is nothing more than another rehash of the type of game we are all too familiar with. Sure, the independently scrolling backgrounds (like those found in Genesis and TG-16 games) and fabulous sound are great, but all the new technology in the world won't stop player boredom.

Let's get with it, gang. We need some truly *new* games!

NAY



We aren't mentioning any names, but there are rumblings that certain mail-order companies—mainly some of those that buy and sell used video games—are ripping off customers in a variety of ways. We've gotten letters from a bunch of readers documenting paid-for merchandise not being received for weeks, broken products, unanswered phone lines and used equipment not being compensated for.

If any of these stories are true, shame on the individuals involved. Sadly, this type of thing does happen; but at the same time, some companies make mistakes. The bottom line is to beware of any mail-order transaction. Document *everything* to protect yourself from getting burned. Finally, if you have a problem with a VG&CE advertiser, we want to know about it. Please write to us, and tell us what happened. Of course, accidents happen, but if we get too many complaints about one company, we'll make an effort to remove its ad from the magazine.



YEA

Computer-game manufacturers, on the other hand, are going for some interesting ideas and uses of the hardware. For example, such games as *3 in Three* (Cinemaware), *Wing Commander* (Origin), *Rise of the Dragon* (Dynamix) and Sierra's CD-based products are delving into new territory, demonstrating innovative programming techniques, game concepts and exploitation of high-capacity media.

In fact, a recent visit by VG&CE's editors to Cinemaware's offices demonstrated the company's desire to break new ground in computer and video games. Look for the makers of *It Came From the Desert*, the *TV Sports* line of products and *Defender of the Crown* to continue to push technology in a variety of formats, be it producing cutting-edge computer games, converting titles for various video-game consoles (including plans for Nintendo's Super Famicom) or writing the book on programming for the upcoming CD-I (interactive compact disc).

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Joe Montana Football

SEGA

For the Sega Genesis (\$49.95)

| | | | | | | | | | | |
|-------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|
| SOUND/MUSIC | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| GRAPHICS | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| PLAYABILITY | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| OVERALL | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |

After all the hype, hoopla and holdups, it's finally here—the eagerly anticipated result of one of the biggest video-game endorsement deals of all time. The final version of *Joe Montana Football* bears no resemblance to the horizontally scrolling football game that had been shown in Sega's TV and print ads. Nor does it look anything like the 8-bit Sega Master System version. Like *TV Sports: Football* or *John Elway's Quarterback*, it's a flat-perspective vertically oriented contest that emphasizes action over strategy.

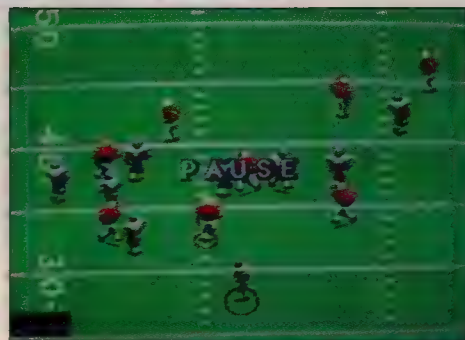
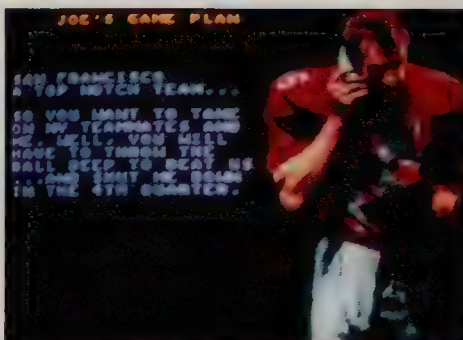
Let's get some of the details out of the way, shall we? Players can compete against the computer or against a friend, but there's no two-player-cooperative mode. If you play alone, you can participate in a playoff series that leads up to the "Sega Bowl," or you can play only the last two minutes of a game using a randomly generated score. The 16 teams included are identified by city only; the game is not endorsed by the National Football League or the NFL Players' Association, so the teams have no names, and they don't wear the same colors as their NFL counterparts.

With or without the ball, players can choose four different plays from each of six different formations, for a total of 24 offensive plays and 24 defensive patterns. If you need help, the computer suggests "Joe's Play," ostensibly the call that Montana would make if he were in your shoes. Penalties, injuries and fumbles are also included.

As you might expect from a cartridge that's endorsed by a three-time Super Bowl MVP quarterback, the passing game is handled beautifully. I can't even begin to describe the tremendous flexibility that's available when throwing the ball. Also, despite the seemingly overwhelming complexity of the passing plays, the control scheme is really very natural once you've experienced a few games. The "helmet display" is a nice touch; it's a window that shows your intended receiver. The "frame"

VIDEO GAMES REVIEWS

Joe Montana Football allows gamers to choose from a total of 24 offensive plays and defensive patterns.



surrounding the window gives the impression that you're looking out from inside a football helmet. Most important, the game does not stress passing at the expense of the rushing game. That's a problem that has plagued too many football video games, and *Joe Montana Football* is well-balanced in that regard.

Sega has also done a good job of including realistic "skill" factors without getting the player bogged down in statistics and complex menu screens. Granted, some people enjoy keeping track of individual players' stats, but *Joe Montana Football* keeps things simple for the casual gamer. The different teams have noticeably different strengths and weaknesses, as do the players who make up those teams, but this information is not essential to your enjoyment of the action. If you just want to play a quick, brainless ten-minute game, you can. On the other hand, if you insist on knowing which of your defensemen can blitz most effectively, it's easy to find out.

On the negative side, there's no question that it's far too easy for the ballcarrier to break a tackle. Some of the teams have kick returners who can literally run rings around would-be tacklers, and if one of them should get too close, a few jabs at the "B" button will shake him loose. Because of this flaw, scores of 100 points or more are common when playing against the computer. The two-player mode is a lot of fun, partly because you can handicap the better of the two players by assigning him or her a lesser team. But to get a decent challenge out of the one-player game, you've got to pick a really pathetic team and let the computer be San Francisco every time.

In what must surely be considered a landmark in gaming history, the voice of Joe Montana himself can be heard throughout the game. "Welcome to *Joe Montana Football*," says the man, and the title screen cycles through digitized photos of Montana winking and pointing at you. Big plays are also rewarded with exclamations like "Great catch!" or "Great play!" Aside from the hissing crowd noises, the sound effects are good, and the music is above average, but I can't understand why the tunes and sound effects

were not programmed in stereo. This is one of the most important Genesis titles to date, and it deserves much more than the rather ordinary mono treatment it's been given.

Sega nearly missed the boat

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with this one; the pigskin season has already ended, and a lot of potential consumers were swept away by the realism and general excellence of Electronic Arts' *John Madden Football*, which was released just in time for the holiday shopping crunch. But *Joe Montana Football* is a game for video-game players, not just football fans, and a lot of Genesis owners should agree that it was worth waiting for.

—Chris Bieniek

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Adventure Island II

HUDSON SOFT

For the Nintendo Entertainment System (\$49.95)

| | | | | | | | | | | |
|-------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|
| SOUND/MUSIC | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| GRAPHICS | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| PLAYABILITY | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| OVERALL | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |

Adventure Island II is obviously a sequel to *Adventure Island* and picks up where the last one left off. Yes, it seems that the Evil Witch Doctor hasn't given up yet, and although Princess Leilani may be safe, her sister Tina isn't. Our unfriendly doctor has stolen her away and hidden himself within a chain of eight deadly islands, all full of his monstrous creations. Playing the part of Master Higgins, a chubby little fellow in a grass skirt and baseball cap, your journey will include travel through the isles, battling the doctor's creatures armed only with a hand axe. You'll occasionally be helped out by your fireball-spewing, tail-thrashing or rock-dropping dinosaur friends.

You start your quest with three lives, your hat and the skirt on your hips. All other items must be found as you travel throughout the islands. Food appears around you as different fruits, which must be eaten to keep your energy level up. You lose energy over time and whenever you stumble over an obstacle in your path. Enemies that contact you don't drain energy; however, they will defeat you with one touch. Other items, such as your axe, skateboards and friendly dinosaurs, as well as hidden warp areas, bonus areas or secret rooms, are all found within eggs that either lay about or are occasionally dropped by one of the doctor's creatures when it is defeated.

When first entering an area of the island, a menu of sorts

Hudson Soft's *Adventure Island II* will keep you coming back for more with its intriguing game play.



is presented that will allow you to select which items you would like to use in that area. Some of your dinosaur accomplices aren't able to travel in water, for example, so you can select another that can. As eggs are collected, you can increase your supply of each kind of helper and collect extra axes for later stages. Each time you die, all of your current possessions are lost. Using these items, you must run, jump and sometimes fly through each stage, all the while either avoiding or defeating the monsters in your path.

The stages themselves are basically made up of jungle, underwater, snowy and desert landscapes, with a few variations. Many of the landscapes are similar from island to island, and except for enemy placements, there isn't quite as much variety as one might expect with nine to 14 possible areas on each island. At the end of each island is a boss creature that must be killed—of course—before you can progress to the next island.

If you've played the first *Adventure Island* or are familiar with the first few *Wonder Boy* games, this game will be familiar both in its game play and even in some of the strategies involved. Only one player may compete in this game, and unlimited continues are available. However, when continuing, your game starts over back at the first stage of the island that you are currently on, without any of the items that you have collected. (The only exception is if you have acquired the hidden Hudson Bee, which will let you keep your items by simply holding

left and pressing start.) A level select is available, though don't count on it to make the game much easier. Some islands simply can't be traversed unless you have at the very least a weapon at your side.

Overall, what makes this game interesting is the game play—it keeps you coming back for more. The graphics are average, as

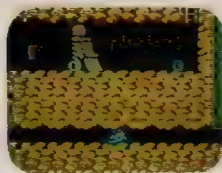
is the music, but they are good enough so that they don't really detract from the game much. *Adventure Island II* has enough challenge to keep even better players working for a while in their quest to defeat the doctor.

—Brent Walker

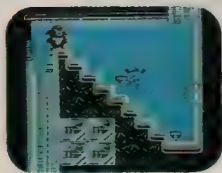
Hudson Soft
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South San Francisco, CA 94080
(415) 871-8895



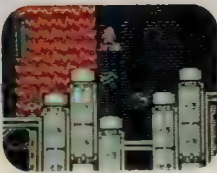
Mega Man[®] 3. Anything else you need to know?



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You and your sidekick Rush will fly over enemy territory to avoid the walking time bombs.

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CAPCOM[®]
USA

Thunder & Lightning

ROMSTAR

For the Nintendo Entertainment System (\$44.95)

In *Thunder & Lightning* the player must use the Demo Ball to escape the "Thirty Walls of Regret."

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|-------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|
| SOUND/MUSIC | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| GRAPHICS | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| PLAYABILITY | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| OVERALL | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |

In his never-ending quest to savor fine foods, the Romstar character Mr. Chin has sparked the ire of the god Thunder Warrior. "There are foods better left uneaten, answers better left unknown and places better left unseen," the god reasons with contrivance. As punishment for pursuing sensual delights of the taste buds, he imprisons Mr. Chin behind the "Thirty Walls of Regret."

There's only one way out for the food connoisseur. Mr. Chin must use a stick to deflect a ball (referred to as the "Demo Ball") to knock out the individual pieces of the Thirty Walls of Regret. Moving Mr. Chin side-to-side, if you clear away all the parts of the first wall, you'll be advanced to the second one—and so on.

Wait a second. Doesn't this sound like *Arkanoid*? Yes and no. Yes in the playability sense, no in that this game is called *Thunder & Lightning*. Otherwise, this is indeed an *Arkanoid* play-alike.

Let's look at the evidence, shall we? Hit one of three "power-up carriers" (a flying saucer, submarine or airplane) with the Demo Ball, and it will release a "special item." Catching one of these items as it descends will modify Mr. Chin's stick: extend the length of it, enable it to "catch" the Demo Ball or give it the capability of shooting missiles. Other items affect the Demo Ball itself: they might enlarge the size and power of it, slow its speed down or split it apart into either three or six separate balls. There's an item that will give Mr. Chin an extra life too.

There are four bad guys out to complicate Mr. Chin's breakout. Sea anemones spit out two balls if they get hit by the Demo Ball. This can be either a hindrance or a help. Another creature that can function as a help is the bird. Hitting this feathered friend will cause it to fly away, smashing through wall pieces. The octopus' only aim is to weigh down Mr. Chin's stick and, thus, slow his movement. Especially bothersome, however, are the turtles, which crawl into spaces and take the place of blocks. Then there's the Thunderwarrior man himself. The only mildly interesting aspect of *Thunder*

& *Lightning* is when he appears hurling lightning bolts at Mr. Chin.

Graphics are "nice" but plain overall—blasé would be a kinder way of saying it. The music is impressive, but it doesn't vary much. In fact, the soundtrack is so good that it seems wasted on the dull visuals and game play.

It might be true that this is the only game of its type for the NES. After all, Taito's *Arkanoid* is a little hard to come by these days. But so what? *Thunder & Lightning* doesn't present a different variation on *Arkanoid*-type games—it merely clones them and doesn't do an impressive job. Hey, times are tough now, and for 40 bucks you think you would get something new—or at least a unique wrinkle or challenge to something old.

—Howard H. Wen

Romstar, Inc.
22857 Lockness Ave.
Torrance, CA 90501
(213) 539-5283

Bomberman

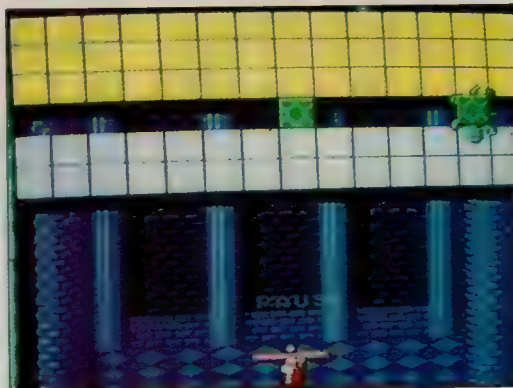
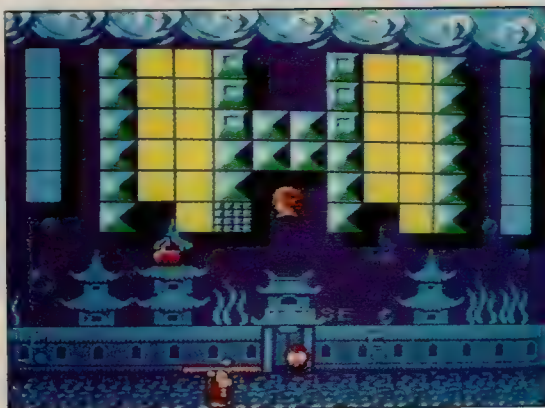
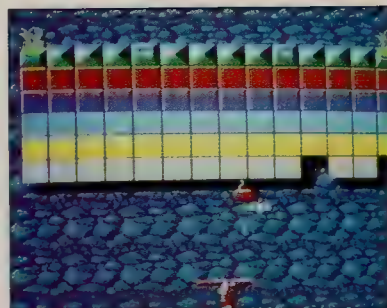
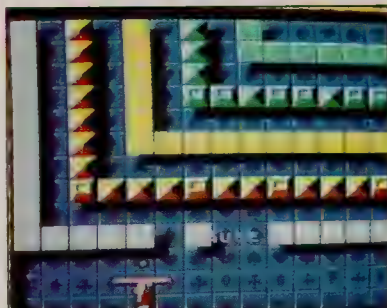
NEC

For the TurboGrafx-16 (\$49.99)

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| SOUND/MUSIC | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| GRAPHICS | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| PLAYABILITY | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| OVERALL | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |

Hudson Soft's *Bomberman* for the TG-16 (also available for NES) is a simple strategy game with the added appeal of wild, wanton destruction. Like *Boxy Boy*, *Tricky Kick* and other puzzle games, it's played on a grid around which you maneuver, trying to avoid deadly opponents, cutting a path through the scenery and finding helpful items—such as an exit! Simple to learn and more addictive than many games, *Bomberman* is too quick a play for serious players, types that like to sit down and burn a hole in the joypad from eight-hour sessions.

That's the problem. You'll be hard-pressed to tear yourself away, but if you don't, the game will be over in a day or two. With three continues and a password system, you have, in effect, a game with unlimited continues (if you run out of continues, you just use the password to reach the same spot). Nobody's forcing you to use the password, so you can extend the life of the game by not using it. That's not very satisfying when the game tempts you so readily to keep playing.



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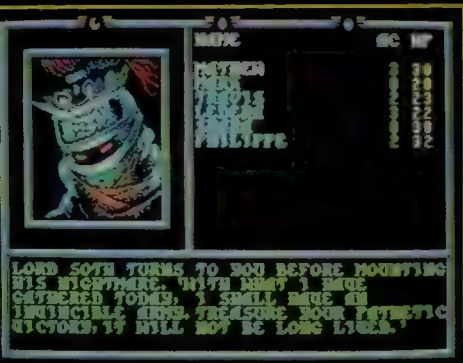


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STRATEGIC SIMULATIONS, INC.®



You'll probably do as I did, give in and keep playing. There are eight levels, each of which has eight areas. Each level takes you closer to the winged villain who's kidnapped your girlfriend; the final three levels are in various stages of the villain's castle. The terrain, which varies from level to level, is nice (though it has no bearing on game play), particularly one level in which you must slog through screen after screen of knee-deep water. Most areas scroll either vertically or horizontally.

Each area is dotted with stones that you cannot walk through and that cannot be destroyed. But scattered throughout are other obstacles (bushes, hills, piles of wood) that can be destroyed with bombs. Eyeballs, wizards, ghosts and little creatures of all shapes and sizes patrol the area. The eighth area of each level is an especially amusing challenge in which there are no obstacles to get rid of, but you battle long snakes and weird, powerful creatures that require frequent bombings before they'll succumb.

The real fun comes from setting off bombs. You've got to be tricky and lead the creatures into the explosions. This gets tougher as the creatures get smarter and faster while you progress. You can create enormous chains of explosions that reshape the maze totally and destroy handfuls of enemies at once; it's gruesome how satisfying a good explosion can be!

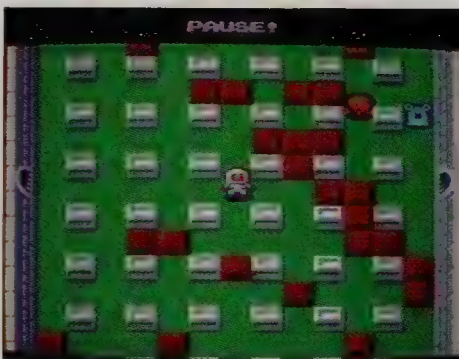
Hidden under the obstacles in each area are the exit and the bonus. The exit won't activate until you've destroyed every opponent in the area. The bonuses differ from area to area: There's a timer that allows you to set the bombs off on command, suits that let you survive normally fatal explosions, extra lives and so on. Each item is yours to use from area to area until you lose your current life.

The sound effects make good use of stereo and the explosions make a satisfying roar. The music isn't varied enough, changing only once per level, but it's bouncy and cute, just like the game. The graphics are strictly cartoonish and the animation very simple, but the game's strength lies in the strategy, not in the graphics. There are two separate two-player modes: one for a pair of TG-16s and the other for two TurboExpresses linked together.

Hotshots will finish this cart the day they bring it home. That's the only drawback to *Bomberman*, which is otherwise an extremely habit-forming and enjoyable diversion.

—Joshua Mandel

NEC Technologies
1255 Michael Drive
Wood Dale, IL 60191
(708) 860-9500



Bomberman, by Hudson Soft, is a simple strategy game with the added appeal of wild, wanton destruction.

Arch Rivals

ACCLAIM

For the Nintendo Entertainment System (\$44.95)

| | | | | | | | | | | |
|-------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|
| SOUND/MUSIC | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| GRAPHICS | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
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| OVERALL | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |

There was a time when video-game designers were treated like celebrities.

The recognition started with Activision, which clearly identified the persons responsible for each new release. That was useful information at the time: If you liked a game that had been designed by David Crane, for example, it wasn't unreasonable to expect his next game to be pretty good too. Nowadays, most cartridge-based titles are designed in Japan, and nobody seems to be interested in keeping track of who did what.

That's why you're probably not familiar with Bally/Midway's Brian Colin, the designer who's responsible for the zany artwork in coin-ops like *Rampage*, *Xenophobe* and of course, *Arch Rivals*. Colin kindly refused to comment when I asked for his opinion on the NES versions of *Rampage* and *Xenophobe*, a pair of near misses that left me bored and disappointed—and less enthusiastic about NES adaptations of popular arcade games.

Arch Rivals is a one- or two-player basketball game that features cartoonish roundball heroes in two-on-two competition. Actually, the game has as much in common with boxing as it does with basketball. You see, the referee is nearsighted, and the players can punch each other out on the court without fear of drawing a foul. I'm not going to preach about fairness, ethics or the reason why sporting events have rules; I doubt that anyone is going to be inspired to try this in real life. Besides, I'm guilty of

exploiting this feature myself, to the fullest: If an opponent makes a three-pointer when I didn't expect him to, I'll just watch the ball sail through the hoop and calmly slug the guy who sent it there.

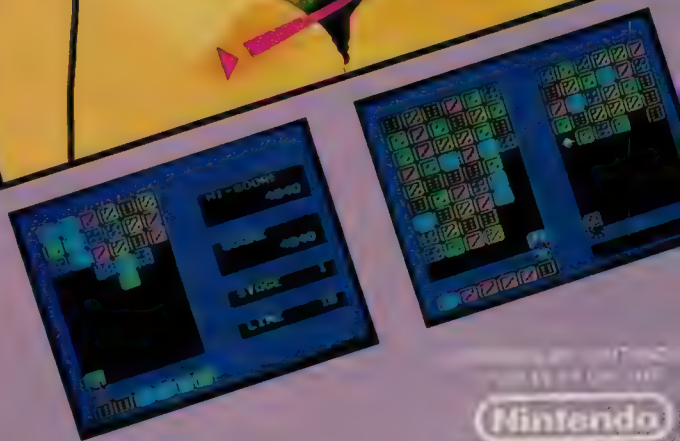
A couple of neat "extras" have survived the translation from the coin-op: the backboards shatter, the coaches make angry gestures and your player may trip over the little roly-poly referee. It's not hard to master the intricacies of a game that encourages cheating, and that's why the two-player game is more fun than challenging the predictable old NES. And the graphics?

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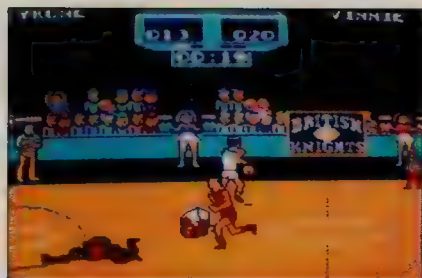
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Well, the characters look just fine in the close-up shots that interrupt the game each time a player scores, but during the main action there's not enough color or detail. The players' washed-out features are a sore spot, particularly if you're familiar with the comical facial expressions that helped make the arcade version so enjoyable.

Another thing you should know about *Arch Rivals* is that the game is loaded with huge, annoying advertisements for a certain manufacturer of athletic footwear. I don't think there's anything inherently wrong with the practice of advertising in games; in fact, it sometimes tends to contribute to a game's realism. But when the halftime show in a basketball video game consists of three cheerleaders shaking their hips while the one in the middle holds up a giant A...well, that's taking it a little too far.

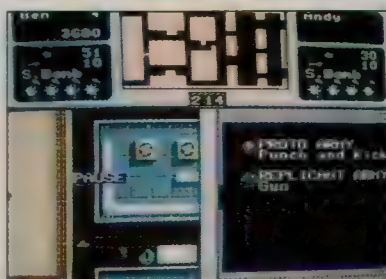
I'd hate to think that the NES isn't capable of delivering a decent, good-looking version of a game as simple as this one. If the game play was good enough to hide the shortcomings of the graphics, I wouldn't complain. But *Arch Rivals* wears out its welcome after repeated play, just like the aforementioned *Rampage* and *Xenophobe* did. That's a shame; all three of these titles are a lot of fun at the arcades, and I'm sure they'll eventually be treated better by more advanced video game systems. In the meantime, Acclaim has purchased the exclusive first rights to release NES versions of Bally/Midway titles. I'll be keeping my fingers crossed for a successful translation of Colin's *Pigskin 621 A.D.*—and this time with *no advertisements*.

—C. B.

Acclaim Entertainment, Inc.
71 Audrey Ave.
Oyster Bay, NY 11771
(516) 624-9300

Arch Rivals is a one- or two-player basketball game that features cartoonish roundball heroes in two-on-two competition.

Crack Down is the third video-game produced by Sage's Creation for the Genesis.



Crack Down

SAGE'S CREATION

For the Sega Genesis (\$49.95)

| | | | | | | | | | | |
|-------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|
| SOUND/MUSIC | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| GRAPHICS | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| PLAYABILITY | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| OVERALL | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |

Sage's Creation's third cartridge for the Genesis, *Crack Down*, looks very promising when you first boot it—complex and high-tech, with windows featuring a map, an overhead closeup, ammunition, local enemy and weapon readouts and more. The game is a series of search-and-destroy missions, carried out inside mazelike areas crawling with guard robots and ammo (a bit like some sections of *Rambo III*). Rather than finding hostages, you start each mission with a cache of time bombs, all of which must be placed in strategic locations before you can leave.

Unfortunately, *Crack Down* doesn't quite live up to its promise. Each area is barely tougher than the next, and there aren't all that many to begin with. You'll finish the entire first level (four missions) with your eyes closed. Moreover, the technique for each mission rarely changes, except for some occasional tricky areas that require accurate timing.

The robots are typically stupid; most are easily duped into walking into your line of fire. You have the added ability of pressing yourself close to the wall to avoid bullets.

There's plenty of ammo to be found throughout the mazes, so unless you're trigger-happy, getting ammo generally won't be a problem. The toughest part is to complete the missions before your time limit is up and your bombs explode.

Another disappointing aspect is the graphics. The window showing the overhead view of the action is pretty small, taking up only about a third of the screen. Thus the characters are tiny and poorly defined, as in *Super Hydlide*. Although there's a lot of interesting scenery, it's all too small to warrant much attention.

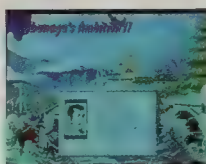
You're equipped with three weapons: a machine gun, a cannon and smart bombs. The machine gun fires a steady stream of bullets, adequate for most situations. Cannon ammo is scarcer, but a single shot can take out several robots at once. Smart bombs destroy everybody around you. They're rarest of all and must be carefully allocated. I was hoping to pick up the guards' flame throwers and other advanced weapons, but that's not allowed.

The most disappointing aspect of the game is its lack of depth. *Crack Down* plays like such dungeon action games as *Gauntlet* and *Dungeon Explorer*. But

Return To A World of Loyalty and Honor



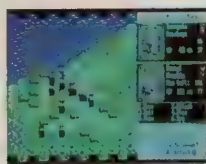
Nobunaga's Ambition II, a best seller in Japan, is now available for IBM PC/Compatibles and Nintendo!



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- Not copy protected.
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unlike those, there are no puzzles on each maze, nor interlocking puzzles solved by exploring and finding needed items on various mazes. Instead, it's all just a frantic race to drop off bombs and reach the exits. I think the game would have been measurably richer and more interesting if you had something more to do than creep around and shoot everything.

Lest I cast too gloomy a light on this cartridge, let me point out a few refreshing features. For once, here's an action game with no "bosses" and no overwhelmingly difficult characters at the end of each level. Also, the music is varied and plentiful, at times haunting and at times stirring.

Overall, although I enjoyed *Crack Down*, it was too little and over too soon. Not enough missions and not enough variety. But given its great music, easy play mechanic and particularly enjoyable two-player mode, it might be a good choice for those looking for an easy, quick-playing combat game. It might also provide an alternative to the run-jump-and-kick and slide-and-shoot games that seem to predominate today's game market.

—J. M.

Sage's Creation
12062 Valley View
Garden Grove, CA 92645
(714) 893-0309

M.U.S.H.A.

SEISMIC

For the Sega Genesis (NA)

| | | | | | | | | | | |
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| SOUND/MUSIC | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| GRAPHICS | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| PLAYABILITY | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| OVERALL | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |

Anyone who has been following my reviews for the last few months knows I'm darn sick and tired of shoot-'em-ups. It seems to me the market for these blast-fests must have been saturated long ago. So imagine my chagrin when upon looking at my review assignments for this month, I discovered both were shooters. Surely, someone wants me to end up in a rubber room! Nevertheless, after much cursing and whining, I set to work. Surprise! One of the two games,



In *Crack Down*, you are equipped with three weapons: a machine gun, a cannon and smart bombs.



What sets *M.U.S.H.A.* far above most shoot-'em-ups is its splendid artwork and animation.

M.U.S.H.A., is actually quite good.

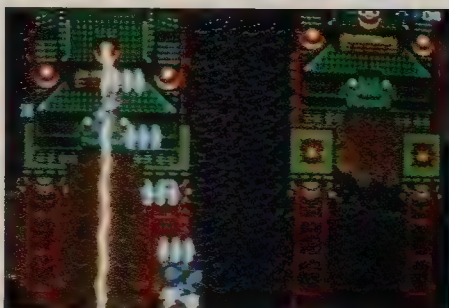
In *M.U.S.H.A.* you play a battle pilot who, regardless of his orders to return to base, has taken it upon himself to rid his planet of alien invaders. At the beginning of the game, the scene is set with a rather lengthy, semi-animated story sequence, in which our hero flies with his buddies on an ill-fated mission. The other fighters all turn back, but you, as Terri, get to take over the controls and finish the mission.

As far as game play goes, *M.U.S.H.A.* has little new to offer the shooter genre. As you fly through each vertically scrolling level, you scoop up different types of weapon and power-up icons, while blasting enemy invaders and avoiding their gunfire.

Four types of weapons are available. You always have your forward guns. The fire power of the guns can be increased by scooping up power capsules that are released when you shoot the power-up icon. You can add double- and triple-fire, as well as gun pods that can be maneuvered into different positions.

Other weapons include an electronic-beam generator that can shoot the full length of the screen, a rotating shield that destroys everything it touches and rapid-fire missiles. Your forward guns are fired with Button C, while Button B controls the other weapons, giving you two weapon systems at once with which to fight.

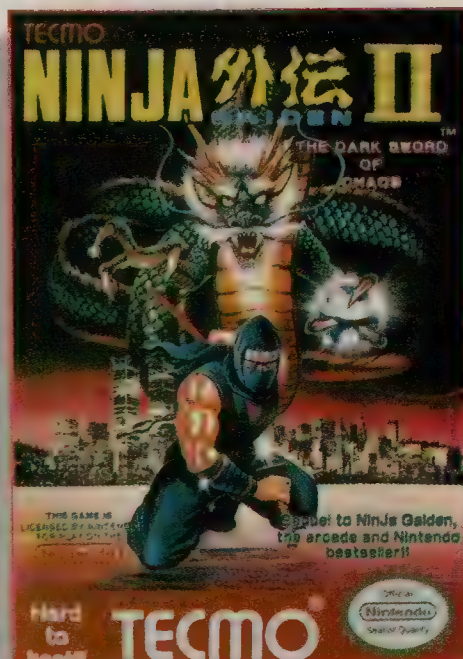
What sets *M.U.S.H.A.* far above most of its competition is the excellent graphics. Every level of the game features splendid artwork and animation. In Level 3, for example, you begin by fighting a mini-boss over the floor of the enemy base. When the mini-boss is defeated, the floor tiles fall away, leaving you looking down into a deep abyss. Believe me, this viewpoint, combined with the simulated 3-D animation,



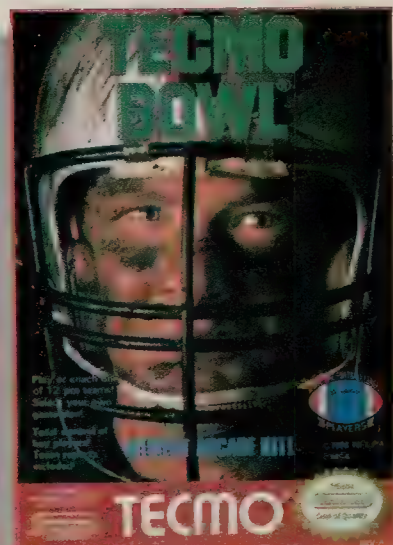
YOU'VE TRIED THE REST NOW PLAY THE BEST!



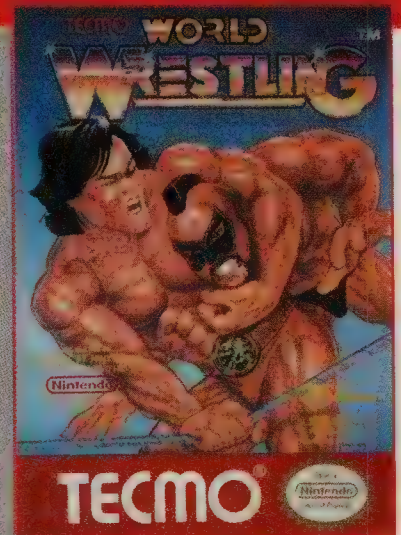
- Single player action
- Superior graphics & music
- 6 special weapons
- 4 "Power up" items
- 9 Cinema displays
- 20 Different stages
- Continue option



- 1 or 2 players
- Superior graphics
- Coaching mode
- Password for continued action
- 12 teams
- Super action cinema screens



- 1 or 2 players
- Superior graphics
- Password for continued action
- Instant close-ups
- Over 20 different cinema displays
- 24 Different teams
- Choose from 18 different pitches



- 1 or 2 players
- Superior graphics
- Animated announcer
- Outside-the-ring action
- 34 different killer moves
- Power meters
- Training mode for 1 player



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means acrophobes better stay away! Most of the scenes are played from this dizzying viewpoint.

M.U.S.H.A. is a difficult game, one that requires quick reflexes and a nimble trigger finger. To tailor the game to your skill level, an options screen lets you choose one of three difficulty settings: easy, normal and hard. Even on the easy setting, you'll be treated to sizzling action. Also available on the options screen are music- and sound-test modes.

If you're still in the market for shooters, *M.U.S.H.A.* is one you'll want on your game shelf. Even though it doesn't play much differently than its competitors, its extraordinary graphics and animations make it a delight.

—Clayton Walnum

Seismic Software Inc.
3375 Scott Blvd., Suite 100
Santa Clara, CA 95054
(408) 727-3682

Aero Blasters

NEC

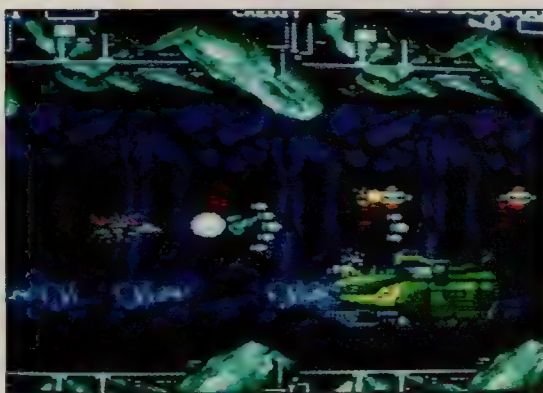
For the TurboGrafx-16 (\$61.99)

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| SOUND/MUSIC | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| GRAPHICS | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| PLAYABILITY | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| OVERALL | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |

So you think you're a hot shot, huh? A fast-fingered, bonzo, button-pushing, speed-shooting demon? Think they haven't yet made a shoot-'em-up that can take you down? Well, prepare to have your ego neutered, because *Aero Blasters* is the most outrageously tough blaster ever. If you can get to the end of this puppy, you've earned your wings!

The scenario: It's the year 2030 AD, and a gang of meemies called the Mega Load Masters have mounted an all-out invasion on Earth. They've already wiped out all the armies. Now they're planning to destroy all life forms and leave Earth a barren planet. Luckily, a dude name Takeda (who has avoided discovery by hiding out on an island) has invented two ships that just might be capable of knocking out the all-powerful enemy. It's up to you to fly one of those ships, either Blaster 1 or Blaster 2, wipe out the invaders and bring peace back to Earth.

In your quest for peace, you must blast through six stages of alien-infested countryside. Take your battle to the city



Protecting Earth from an invading interstellar army is the object of the game in *Aero Blasters*.

streets, Mecha Cave, stratosphere, orbit, the Fortified Planet and the final battle. Each stage features many types of invaders and ends with a battle to the death with a level boss. Only the ultra-talented will ever meet the boss of bosses, the Mecha Load Master.

Occasionally, as you fight, a weapon-transport pod will appear on the screen giving you a chance to pick up as many power-ups as you can grab. The power-ups and weapons include rear guns, side swipers (rotating and shooting devices that attach to your ship), heli-pods (which attach to the rear of your ship and blast enemies from behind), six-way shooters, missiles and more. One special weapon, the Super Blaster Flash, can damage everything on the screen. It must be charged, however, which takes precious time.

When it comes to graphics, *Aero Blasters* is super. The simulated 3-D backgrounds are colorful and detailed. The enemies are some of the neatest this reviewer has seen in a video game, many of them as impressive-looking as boss enemies in other games. No tiny colored blobs here.

In spite of the awesome graphics, *Aero Blasters* lacks long-term playability. Expert pilots may find this blaster reasonably challenging, but average and novice players will be quickly overwhelmed by the game's difficulty. There are times when the screen is filled from edge to edge with enemies and other obstacles, making suicide the only way to get past.

Whether it's because of its difficulty or just because the game offers little new to the shooter genre, *Aero Blasters* gets boring quickly. If you've tackled every other shooter out there and are looking for something that'll make you sweat, you might want to take a look at *Aero Blasters*. But if you just want a good shooter, you can do better.

—C. W.

NEC Home Electronics, Inc.
1255 Michael Drive
Wood Dale, IL 60191-1094
(708) 860-9500

Sword of Sodan

ELECTRONIC ARTS

For the Sega Genesis (\$49.95)

| | | | | | | | | | | |
|-------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|
| SOUND/MUSIC | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| GRAPHICS | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| PLAYABILITY | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| OVERALL | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |

Sword of Sodan is a bloody hack-and-slice-'em up that plays and looks like

MACHINE
GUNS

6
STREET
TOUGH
LEVELS

SUPER
ARCADE
ACTION

THE PUNISHER

ROCKET
LAUNCHERS

THE NEW

GAME HE LIVES...
WHO WINS

M-16'S



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CIRCLE #106 ON READER SERVICE CARD

an arcade coin-op. This Dark Ages slaughterfest for the Genesis boosts an impressive seven levels. The game manual features a lengthy background narrative that is more suitable for the instructions of a complex role-playing title. Skip the pretentious storytelling and read it later if you wish.

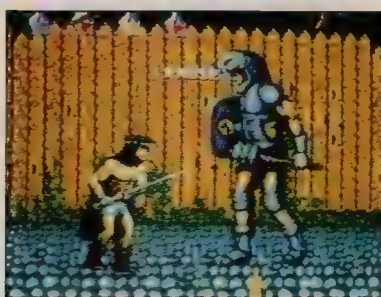
You play the role of either the male warrior Brodan or the equally powerful heroine Shardan. Brodan and Shardan can perform physical moves from crouching and jumping to standard walking. The direction they face may be reversed when necessary, but their advancement has to continue to the right. Armed only with the Sword of Sodan, your warrior does away with enemies by swiping, jabbing and slashing down on them.

A tapestry along the top left of the screen indicates your player's health. It shortens as Shardan or Brodan sustain attacks. The enemies themselves have their own health levels, but they're considerably shorter. The length of your health tapestry can be maintained by drinking vials of hydrolum potion, which some of the enemies drop when slain.

There are other potions to be gathered: Vitalium increases the damage done by your sword; solarium destroys one nearby enemy; and etherium has no effect when used by itself—it must be mixed with other potions. For example, combining vitalium and etherium will give you an extra life. A hydrolum and etherium combination results in a temporary shield for your character. Potions like vitalium and solarium can be put together as well, turning your weapon into a flaming sword. But, like dabbling with chemistry in real life, some combinations can have disastrous results if you don't know what you're doing.

On the first level, you duel with soldiers armed with lances. Next, you must cross a heavily guarded bridge, avoiding and leaping over spikes that shoot up from the walkway. Should you survive these first two ordeals, you'll enter the city streets. Midget guards donning battle armor will greet you—by trying to hack you to death with their axes. After this, your character will need to cross a graveyard in order to enter the Castle Cragganmore. Zombies rise from their graves, walk toward your player and spit at him or her. *Moon-walker* this isn't.

Once inside the castle, giants attack with maces. Defeating these guys is a two-step process: They have to be brought down to their knees by slicing at their groin, then their heads must be quickly



Sword of Sodan, by Electronic Arts, is sure to satisfy the bloodthirsty video gamer.

lopped off. The sound of them gargling on their own blood accompanies every successful decapitation, and there's a substantial amount of the red stuff too. In the underground passage, you slice away at flying demons out to drain your life. From here your player has to live through a grueling obstacle course that features spikes, falling columns, fireballs and pools of molten lava.

Finally, in the castle's tower you face off with some ugly guy called Zoras. He initially appears in the form of a gray, bloblike monster that pauses to give birth to flying demons. If you attack him enough times and live, he'll transform into his true form—a red-robed wizard. As you swing away, his life decreases the faster you hear his heart beat.

The violence in *Sword of Sodan* is, obviously, quite graphic. Besides the giants' demise, all human enemies fall down in bloodied heaps, including Shardan and Brodan. Speaking of which, the characters squeal in pain with digitized voices when hurt and scream when killed.

There's not much music here, other than during the title screen. This game doesn't enamor itself with an overwrought and over-played soundtrack, a rarity these days. Instead, the sound effects, like the eerie chirping of birds in the background and the weapons slashing the air, prove more effective and beneficial.

Sword of Sodan is crass, crude and rude and will likely offend some. Yet it's difficult not to find pleasure amidst all its mayhem. Hacking and slashing hasn't ever looked—or sounded—so good.

—H. H. W.

Electronic Arts
1820 Gateway Drive
San Mateo, CA 94404
(415) 571-7171

G.I. Joe: A Real American Hero

TAXAN

For the Nintendo Entertainment System (\$49.99)

| | | | | | | | | | | |
|-------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|
| SOUND/MUSIC | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| GRAPHICS | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| PLAYABILITY | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| OVERALL | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |

"Yo, Joe!" is a familiar yell to those that observe Saturday morning television with any regularity or have younger siblings that run about screaming with toy weapons. Taxan's *G.I. Joe* cart is based

IT'S NOT WHEN. IT'S HOW.



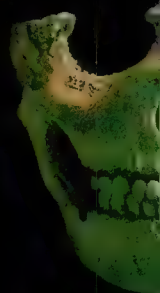
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SKEWERED



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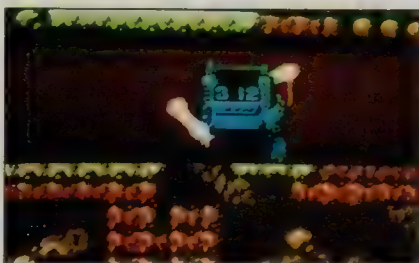
upon the cartoon series that has been running for some time now. For those that haven't been keeping up with Joe through the years, there is now a *G.I. Joe* combat team made up of five uniquely skilled soldiers.

Opposing the *G.I. Joe* team is the evil Cobra organization, a group that has been oppressing peaceful people around the globe for several years. The team's mission is, predictably enough, to wipe out Cobra and restore peace. The mission is divided up into six levels, each made up of three zones, plus the ever-present boss character.

The levels start out simply enough, often with a simple horizontally scrolling scenario sliding by as you jump a few pits and dispatch the occasional Cobra soldier. Things quickly become more challenging, however. Levels begin to take the form of grids, ranging from 2 x 4 screens in size, up to a much larger and more complex 7 x 8 network of passageways. Hidden rooms, destructible walls and plenty of enemy resistance keep the action moving. Exploration, thought and strategy are all essential to succeed in these areas. The boss soldiers become increasingly difficult as well, and the manner in which they must be dealt with varies considerably.

Though there are five members of the *G.I. Joe* team, only three of them may participate at a time in a scene. At the beginning of the level, one member is automatically assigned as the leader. You may then choose two others to participate, depending upon what characteristics you feel are more important in that round. Each character has different abilities—some jump better than others, some have more powerful weapon and punching power, as well as better stamina. These characteristics remain constant throughout; the only thing that may be modified regarding attack strength is your weapon power. If one character's energy is running low or you just need better weapon/jumping power that another of your three team members possesses, simply hit **START** and select the team member best suited for the job at hand. If a character does die, you are presented with a choice of which surviving member to take control of, and that area is started anew.

There are five items that will enhance your character's chances to succeed as they travel from area to area. Ammo icons



Taxan's *G.I. Joe: A Real American Hero* is chock-full of good explosive action, but requires careful thought to make it through some of the levels.

will add from five to 30 shots to your supply (which is shared by all members); K rations will restore life to the character that grabs them; pistols will add to a character's weapon strength (four pistols are needed to go up one level); an occasional bulletproof vest will grant invulnerability for about five seconds; and a "Chevron" item will increase the size of a character's life bar, thereby adding to that person's damage capacity. These items are often hidden behind objects or in secret areas in the grids.

Other features include three types of Cobra vehicles that may be used to make travel around the grids easier and the options of a character fighting either hand-to-hand, with a weapon or with grenades. Each of these styles of attack are very useful, and although it may seem silly that hand to hand combat would be more effective than a Gatling gun against a helicopter—well, some of these

G.I.'s must have big knuckles!

A password feature is also included—a password is provided at the end of each area—so that you may continue from the beginning of each new level in the future. A continue option is also available whenever your players kick off, which starts you at the beginning of the area you were just in. If you were fighting the boss, you must repeat

the prior area, however!

G.I. Joe: A Real American Hero is a good action game, with enough challenge and thought required to keep the *Joe* team on its toes. The backgrounds are colorful, and animation is fairly smooth—some occasional flickering, but nothing excessive. Musical themes and sound effects are fine, and the game plays well. Don't expect straight blasting or shooter action, as there is a bit more to this game than button thrashing.

—B. W.

Taxan USA
161 Nortech Parkway
San Jose, CA 95134
(408) 946-3400

TechnoCop

RAZOR SOFT

For the Sega Genesis (\$59.95)

| SOUND/MUSIC | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
|-------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|
| GRAPHICS | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| PLAYABILITY | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| OVERALL | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |

Most Genesis titles, particularly the exceptional ones that stand out, are either sports titles or scrolling shoot-'em-ups.

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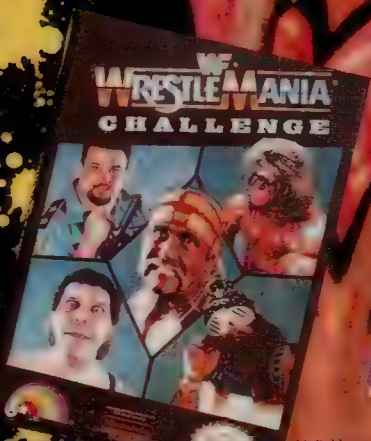
Double-teaming may lead to victory — or disqualification.



Choose from 8 WWF Superstars[™] or enter the ring as "yourself".



Unleash a Flying Atomic Drop — outside the ring.



Developed by Nintendo
for play on the
Nintendo
ENTERTAINMENT
SYSTEM[™]



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CIRCLE #106 ON READER SERVICE CARD



Razor Soft's *TechnoCop* combines a spy adventure, a driving simulation and a multilevel scrolling shooter in one video game.

Razor Soft's *TechnoCop* helps break out of this mold with a lengthy spy adventure that combines a driving simulation with a multilevel scrolling shooter. This makes for a more involving and varied game experience, but *TechnoCop* unfortunately lacks some of the 16-bit elements of look and feel that Genesis owners have come to expect.

It's the 21st century, and society as we know it is on the verge of collapse. An alliance of mutants called the D.O.A. have established their own version of law and order. There are 11 D.O.A. kingpins on the "most wanted" list; your job is to search the crumbling tenements of the City and bring these "perps" to justice.

To that end, you've been equipped with a VMAX Interceptor vehicle. The VMAX gets more and more elaborately outfitted as you successfully complete missions. Your eventual vehicular armaments will include an on-board gun, a turbocharger, wheel rams, a side-mounted cannon, a nuclear-weapon launcher and more. An on-board computer displays a digitized photo of the suspect, his location, how soon you'll need to arrive at the destination and any special instructions. Take careful note of the instructions. They affect how you should capture a suspect.

As you drive down a nondescript highway, you dodge motorcycles, cars and trucks. The highway takes some nicely animated dips and turns, but is liberally decorated with completely misleading directional signs. Ignore them completely. You're obviously supposed to shoot at some of the vehicles, but there's no way to tell which are civilians and which are cannon fodder. The car also has a damage gauge; accumulate enough damage (which is easy to do) and the car breaks down for good—game over. It's a mediocre driving



simulator, not at all in the same league as *Super Monaco GP* or *Super Hang-On*.

The on-foot mission segments are similarly mediocre. You have a very short amount of time in which to blast and jump your way through hordes of D.O.A. villains in search of the criminal you're after. You have two guns, a .95 Automag for maximum explosion and a net gun. Your wrist monitor also shows your health readout. If you're killed, that's it—game over again—and no continues are given. There are stolen objects worth points scattered around in the multilevel buildings (you'll need to use elevators and map some of the more complicated buildings further on), but retrieving them takes up valuable time. Time is always at a premium. You'll have to devote lots of games to looking around in buildings, knowing you'll never catch the thief in time, but figuring out the layout for the next game.

The manual listed several nice features that were nowhere to be found in the game. The graphics are decidedly not up to Genesis standards, looking like average NES graphics with somewhat larger characters. There are a couple of nice moments of animation, mostly involving the car, but most animation is flat and jerky. There's no demo. There are no options for number of players, number of lives, difficulty or sound tests (and hence, no option menu!). The sounds are one of the better aspects of the game; digitized voices and realistic sound effects are actually very good.

Lovers of spy games like *Mission: Impossible* might enjoy *TechnoCop*, but chances are most Genesis players will be disappointed. It's a tried-and-true game idea and fills a void in the Genesis lineup, but the execution is less than top quality.

—J. M.

Razor Soft
7416 N. Broadway, Suite A
Oklahoma City, OK 73116
(405) 843-3505

The Adventures of Rad Gravity

ACTIVISION

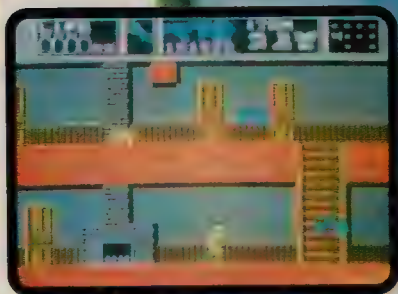
For the Nintendo Entertainment System (\$39.95)

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| SOUND/MUSIC | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| GRAPHICS | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| PLAYABILITY | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| OVERALL | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |

We've all heard of Pac-Man, Mario and Luigi, but how many of us remember Krooz'r, Bounty Bob or Evil Otto? These video-game stars have all but faded into

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open the doors
to doom?



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The warp zone experiments of the brilliant Dr. Chaos have gone horribly wrong. They've unleashed armies of bloodthirsty creatures, trapping him in his remote research facility. Now only his brother Michael can rescue him.

To succeed, Michael must brave a haunted house filled with vicious monsters. Can he fight his way through dangerous passageways? Track down the concealed weapons? Find the secret vials of strength? And assemble the only weapon powerful enough to defeat the ultimate beast, Canbarian?

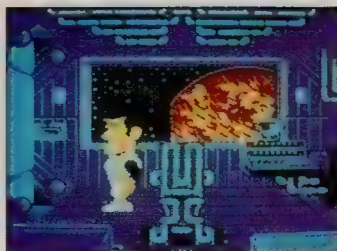
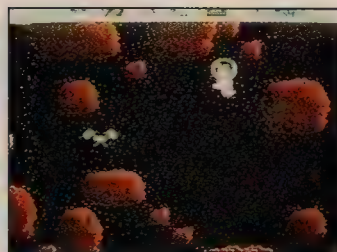
- Thriller graphics
- Three different screen patterns
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the mists of time, despite the fact that each one appeared in more than one game! It's tough to come up with a durable, recognizable character that can stand out from the crowd of ninjas and medieval adventurers that have dominated the video-game industry's second wave. Licensed characters like Batman, Bart Simpson and those ubiquitous Turtles make it even tougher for the Alex Kidds and Bonks to survive.

Activision's answer to this dilemma is a laser-totin', space-truckin' hero called Rad Gravity. Remember that name—he's going to be around for a long time. With his big "George of the Jungle" cleft chin and perfectly coiffed hairdo, he's got what it takes to keep your eyes glued to the screen. (If VG&CE had a rating for charisma, I'd have to give Rad a 10.) Rad smiles constantly as he wanders around the galaxy, stopping on different worlds in his attempts to reconstruct the Compumind network that had linked the United Planets together. Fortunately, he's not alone: Kakos, the last of the Compuminds, is installed on Rad's ship, where it keeps track of the data retrieved by Rad and points the way to Agathos, the living brain that had shut down the network in a fit of madness.



Activision's *The Adventures of Rad Gravity* introduces a new charismatic video-game hero who will keep your eyes glued to the screen.

Each of the planets visited by our hero is different from the last, from the killer robots that populate the steel corridors of Cyberia to Turvia, where

gravity has gone haywire, everything is upside-down (including Rad) and sharks fly through the air! There's also a dense asteroid field that Rad must navigate in his space suit, with nothing but a laser gun to direct his momentum as he drifts through weightless limbo. All of these scenarios are tied together by intermissions that show Rad inside his ship, strutting back and forth between his "captain's chair" and the computer that steers his vessel through hyperspace.

I could rattle on for hours about the little "extras" that make this game special. For example, if you let Rad stand still for too long, he starts whistling and twiddling his thumbs, waiting for you to pick up the control pad again! A hilarious sequence on the planet Effluvia features a pair of long-haired garbage-pickers who steal Kakos right out of Rad's ship. They carry the hapless Compumind between them as Rad chases close behind, yelling, "Hey, come back here with my computer!" There's also a surprise ending, with a final battle against an unexpected "boss." The game's instruction manual is the icing on the cake: It's an entertaining comic book that gives an overview of the plot and further enhances Rad's magnetic personality.

The biggest problem with "Rad Gravity" is the background scenery that scrolls by as Rad scoots around and zaps bad guys. It looks good, but it's very hard to tell which parts of the screen are obstacles. Some areas feature flat platforms that Rad falls right through, while others have solid surfaces that can't be identified as such until you try to stand on them. The music is fun, though it tends to repeat itself too often. But the song that plays behind the title screen is wonderful, a zany electronic ditty that uses a slightly off-key melody to perfectly capture the game's wacky atmosphere.

Despite a few minor weaknesses, *The Adventures of Rad Gravity* is completely refreshing. If this game isn't successful, I'll eat my hat...but if it does well, I'll be looking forward to *The Further Adventures of Rad Gravity*.

—C. B.

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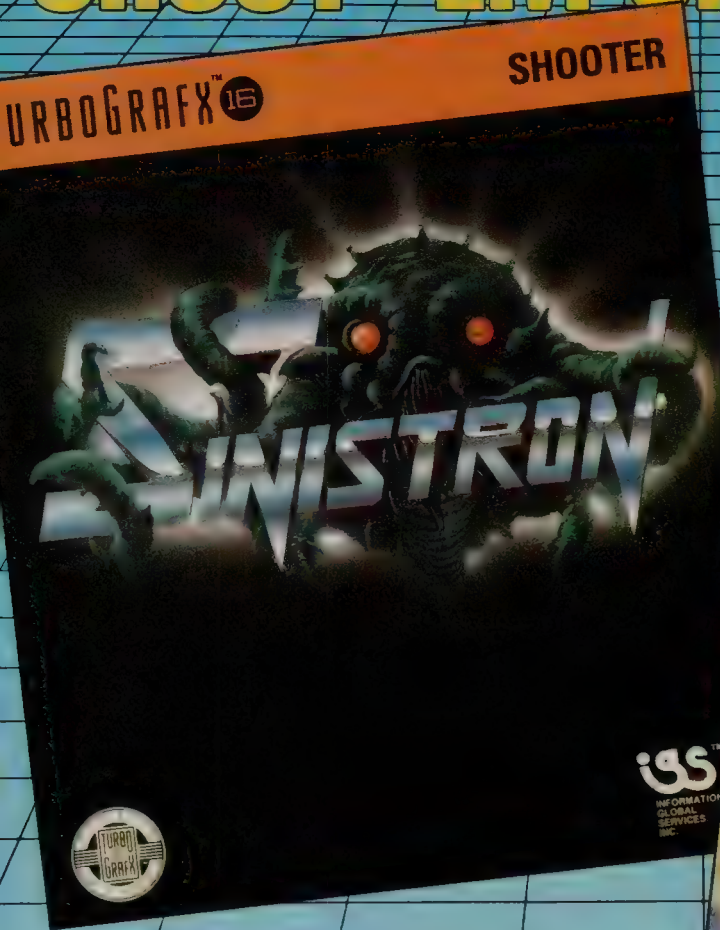
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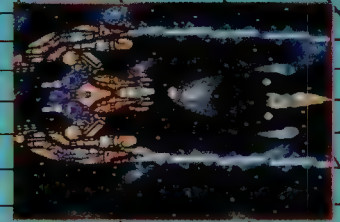
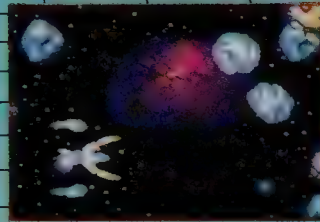
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A Game Boy Advance game case for 'The Legend of Zelda: The Wind Waker'. The cover art features Link in his pirate-themed outfit, sailing on a ship. The title 'THE LEGEND OF ZELDA THE WIND WAKER' is visible at the top. The Game Boy Advance logo is prominently displayed on the right side of the case.







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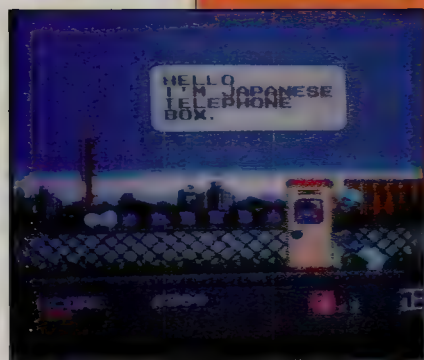
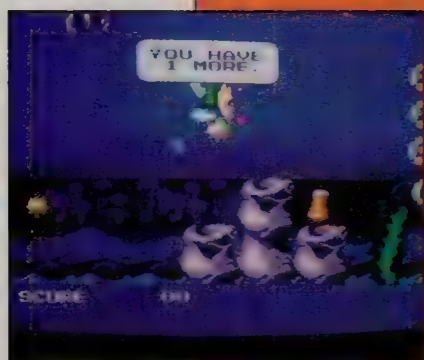
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Here's a key to the abbreviations:

U = Up
D = Down
L = Left
R = Right
A = "A" button
B = "B" button
C = "C" button



BRAVOMAN

(NEC FOR THE TG-16)



Play normally until you reach exactly 10,000 points, then kill your game off. Don't continue—instead, wait for the title screen to appear. Then input the following command: U, R, D, L, II, SELECT, II, SELECT. The continue indicator should be infinite now.



If you press RUN as you die, you can continue at the exact spot you left off.



When you reach the end of a stage, you can jump past Lottery Man and continue to the next stage with all your luck symbols intact.



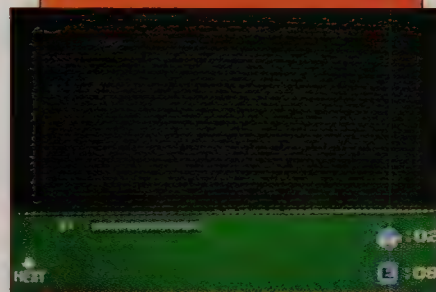
During the title screen, press SELECT and II repeatedly until a special training mode appears. This takes special timing: not too fast, not too slow.

MegaMan 3

(CAPCOM FOR THE NES)



Enter this code to go directly to Dr. Wily's castle. This code should be entered using the blue ball: A1, A3, B2, B5, D3, F4.



To start with nine energy tanks, also place a red ball in A6.



Thunder Force 3

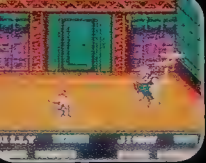
(TECHNOSOFT FOR THE GENESIS)



During play, press START to pause, then press U ten times, B once, D twice and finally, press B once. This sequence will give you all the weapons. Press A for the claw, and then START to unpause the game. You can repeat this as many times as you wish.



continued on page 58



USA: All's well at the dojo... until Marion is kidnapped.



JAPAN: Something mysterious is happening in the Land of the Rising Sun.



NEW CHARACTERS: Once defeated, your bitter enemies join your quest.

TWICE THE CHARACTERS, THREE TIMES THE ACTION!



CHINA: It's a world-wide thriller as you search for Marion and the Sacred Stones.



ITALY: Only your all-new martial arts moves can conquer the gladiators.



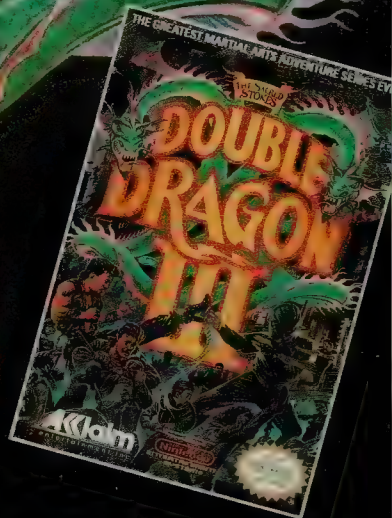
EGYPT: Finally, you confront the Curse of the Pharaohs.

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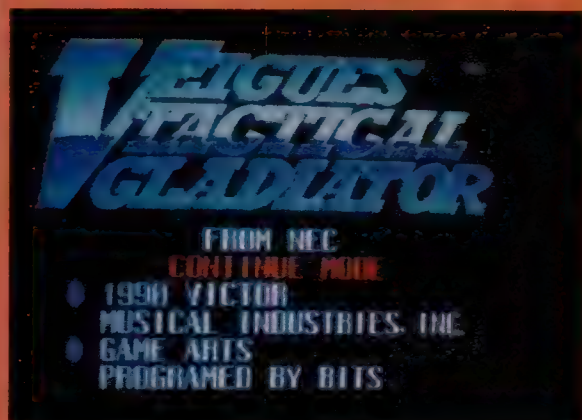
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Veigues Tactical Gladiator

(NEC FOR THE TG-16)



Right after powering-up your TG-16, press and hold L and D and **SELECT**. You should see "Continue Mode" appear on the screen. This egg enables you to continue from the last stage where you were killed.

The number of continues is determined by the following equation: your score (at the time when you were first killed) divided by 1,000,000 points plus 3.



Reset the game (by hitting **RUN** and



SELECT simultaneously) after hitting I and II simultaneously. Then press and hold R and U and **SELECT** until the title screen appears. If the title screen says "Easy Mode," you've successfully entered the command. In this mode your power will be doubled, and the amount of units you get at the end of each stage is also doubled.



During play, hit I and reset the game. Then press and hold L and U and **SELECT** until the title screen appears. When it does, you should be in the music mode. You can play any music in the game by pressing I or II. To get back into the game, reset.



Michael Jackson's Moonwalker

(SEGA FOR THE GENESIS)



John Dion of New Baltimore, Michigan, has found three more ways to become the robot.

- In Level 2-2 go to the top of the garage, and rescue the only child up there.
- In 2-3 get in the elevator, and go up one floor. Now rescue the child on that floor to get the shooting star.
- In Level 3-3 go to the left side of the waterfall. Look straight up and rescue the child above you.

In each of these cases, the child hostage noted must be the first one rescued when you reach that level.

Thanks, John, for these great discoveries.



Kickle Cubicle

(IREM FOR THE NES)



To be able to play a special game, enter the password FbgJ IYAX. This egg was sent in by Greg Colton of Deerfield, Illinois.



continued on page 60

**THIS TINY GAME HAS
1,253 ENEMY SOLDIERS,
392 TIME DELAY BOMBS,
140 LASER CANNONS,
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ONE KICKBUTT
ATTITUDE.**



BUT IT STILL HAS ROOM FOR YOU.

Give or take a few enemies, time delay bombs, laser cannons, and sinkholes, but who's counting. Because you'll need all your skills, good judgement, and quick reflexes to crack this game.

In Crack Down, you must accept a top-secret mission to re-take control of a heavily guarded facility where artificial life systems are created. The only problem is that their evil leader wants to use them to take over the world. And they don't appreciate well-armed visitors, spoiling their plans.

Once inside, you'll have a limited amount of time to set off time delay bombs at key locations inside the compound and get past the patrolling guards.

If you need help, use the two-player split-screen mode. This special option allows you and a friend to blast away with your weapons as two separate teams within the facility.

So if you want a game that has an attitude, make a reservation to play Crack Down. We have just enough room to fit you in.



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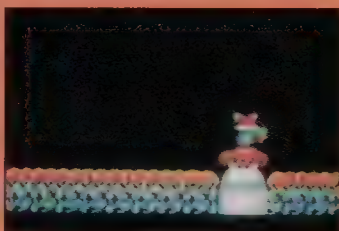


Psycho Fox

(SEGA FOR THE MASTER SYSTEM)



Garret Ulmer of Oxnard, California, has found a great Easter egg, a hidden warp zone in *Psycho Fox*. He says you must first get to World 1-3, then get to the jumping platforms at the end of the stage. Now jump up to the top. At the top there should be three jumping platforms in a triangular shape. Jump off the lower right platform and punch the air. The air will begin to crack. Hit the same spot two to three more times, and a black hole will appear. By jumping into the black hole, you'll be able to enter a warp zone. After sliding down the steel slide, you'll come across two pipes: The first one will take you to World 5-1, and the second will take you to Level 4-1. Thanks, Garret.

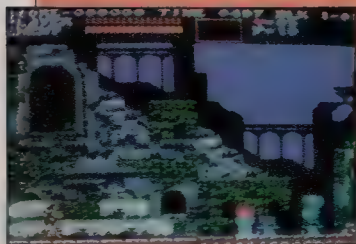


Solstice

(CSG IMAGESOFT FOR THE NES)



To get unlimited lives, during play, press **SELECT** to bring up the select screen, and then input this code: B, **START**, **START**, B, B, **START**, **START**, B, B, **START**, **START**, **START**, B, **START**, B, B, B, **START**, **START**, **START**, B, **START**, B, **START**, **START**, B, **START**, **START**, B, B, **START**, B, **START**. If you input the code correctly, the screen will flash. Thanks again go to Jesse Shanda.

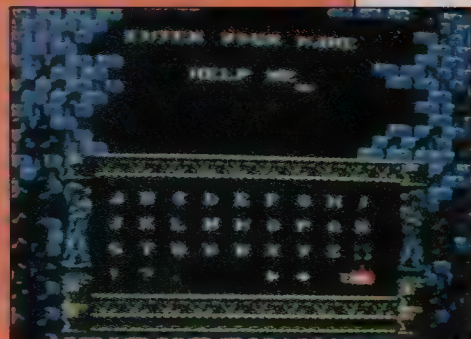


Castlevania III: Dracula's Curse

(KONAMI FOR THE NES)



Brian Brakus, using CompuServe, sent in this egg. Type in **HELP ME** to start with ten men. Thanks for the great find, Brian.



Dick Tracy

(BANDAI FOR THE NES)



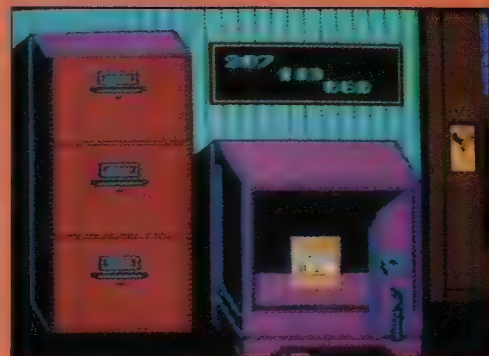
Jesse Shanda of Stockton, California, gave us this Easter egg for *Dick Tracy*, which provides all the combinations for all the cases.

Case 2: 207-119-060

Case 3: 164-003-201

Case 4: 036-224-136

Case 5: 007-215-047

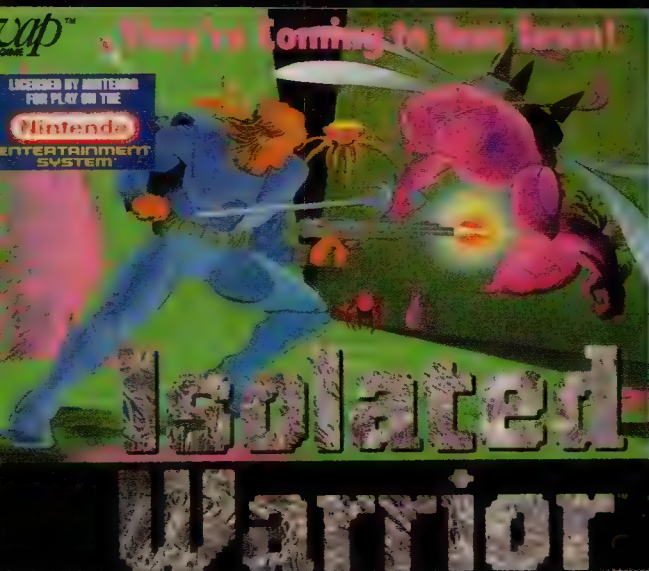




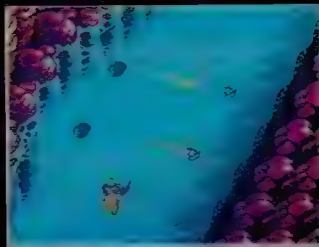
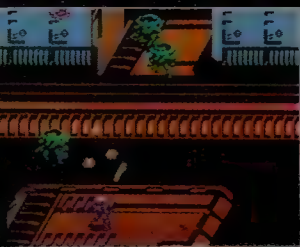
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FOR THE INVASION...

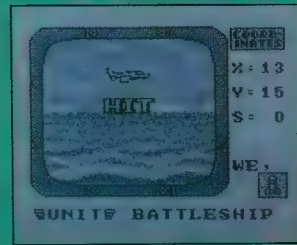
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Will Super MARIO Go Super

As I walked past the Razor Soft booth at a recent show, I witnessed a scene that gave me pause: There stood a well-groomed young lad, age 14 or 15, completely enraptured with a Sega Genesis machine running the just-released *TechnoCop*. I moved in closer to watch as the boy pulled the trigger on his joystick, blew away a menacing gang and chuckled at the bloody hand left smearing on the screen. Apparently, as the graphics in video games become more sophisticated these days, so does the realism.

"Our technology is the state of the art in 16-bit graphics," says Kyle Shelley, the 33-year-old president of Razor Soft, a newly named Genesis licensee that's just bringing its first products to market. "The advantage of the Genesis system is the realism that's brought to the party. With 16-bit products, we can be as graphic as we like, and you can see the results with *TechnoCop*."

TechnoCop's game play is basically *Dirty Harry* meets *Mad Max*. As a member of The Enforcers, a select group of police heroes, you must purge society of a vicious gang of madlums. You run through 11 levels of game play armed with a .95-magnum pistol and a VMAX twin-turbo interceptor patrol car

that's equipped with a side-mounted cannon.

But it's really *TechnoCop*'s realism that is found to be a somewhat startling—perhaps refreshing—change of pace from most action games currently on the shelves. While competing systems (like the Nintendo Entertainment System) also run a bevy of action games, the characters that you "destroy" just disappear, like the alien

did in the early 1960's sci-fi series *The Invaders* (if anybody remembers that little chestnut!). With *TechnoCop*, you get carnage. It's this added realism that's bound to net Razor Soft plenty of attention and popularity among both young and older game players.

As
Graphics
Quality
Increases,
Video
Games Get
More
Realistic
?

violence sells

"Violent games are popular because people who spend the most money on games are boys ages 10-16," explains Howard Wirt, NEC's assistant vice-president of home entertainment. "These boys are interested in controlling their environment, and that's rarely something they can do in real life."

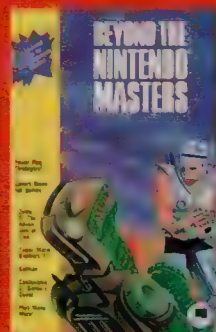
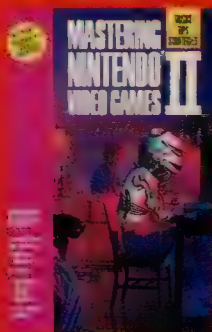
For NEC's TurboGrafx-16 system, there's a number of soft-core action adventures, including *Bonk's Adventure*. Bonk is a pre-

BY STACEY ROTHENSTEIN



As a combination *Dirty Harry* and *Mad Max*, the hero must defeat an alliance of mutants in Razor Soft's *TechnoCop*.

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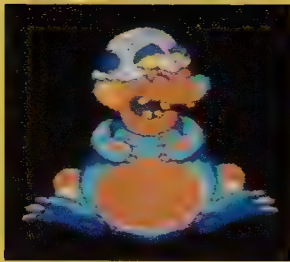
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In Bonk's Adventure, by NEC, the main character literally uses his head to defeat the gang of bad guys.



ic "cave dude," whose only weapon during the game is his head—so he head-butts characters for points. The game play is similar to *Super Mario Bros.*—some complaints have been voiced to that effect—and although challenging, this game may not quench the older player's thirst for "radical action."

Consequently, for the hard-core action fan, NEC also has *Slatterhouse*, a *Friday the 13th* takeoff where the player is cast as a hockey-masked character out to save his girlfriend from assorted nasties. This one has seven levels of game play that walk you through a funhouse of horror-film stand-ins, from monsters to zombies. The game also has remarkably superior graphics, which further lend to its gory feel.

Violent-action games are by no means a monopoly of the new systems. Nintendo, which continues to dominate the video-game marketplace, says that approximately 10% of its games are violent: The player either shoots, punches, kicks or grabs something or somebody quite a bit.

Acclaim and its subsidiary, IJN, two of Nintendo's largest licensees, produce ten NES titles per year, the most violent of which is *Narc*. But the Acclaim people are careful not to spotlight *Narc*'s violent aspects.

"We don't see *Narc* as violent—we see it as anti-crugs," says company spokesperson Allyn Mills, carefully navigating the issue. "You're busting criminals." So do Clint Eastwood and Arnold Schwarzenegger.

Your mission: Bust Mr. Big and destroy the dreaded criminal empire...use rocket bombs, high-powered machine guns...protect the innocent and punish the guilty...stop nothing."

If that's not violent then what is? "Okay, video games are violent," says Mills, "but that's part of the excitement of the game."

parents' groups steamed

Naturally, there's a mile of controversy surrounding the video-game violence issue. While most parents view games as a harmless distraction, some are concerned with the amount of destructiveness and brutality displayed in the entertainment field.

One fringe group that's up in arms is the National Coalition on TV Violence. Last December, the organization conducted a major comprehensive study on Nintendo video games.

"We found that well over 70% of the 150 games that we surveyed contained high levels of violence," reports Brian Sullivan, the coalition's director. "In essence, the games taught violence to our children."

Akin to Tipper Gore's PMRC (Parents' Music Resource Center), the National Coalition on TV Violence is a nonprofit public-interest group that's dedicated to "reducing

the amount of glamorized violence in the media." The group recently took up the issue of video-game violence.

"1991 will see even more violence in video games," Sullivan predicts. "That's primarily because of the graphic technology available to the manufacturers who make cartridges. They call these games 'action-packed' but 'action' is a code word for violence, which spans every niche: from boxing and wrestling games to the Rambo-esque military-type game."



Acclaim's *Narc* is violent but carries a strong anti-crime theme.



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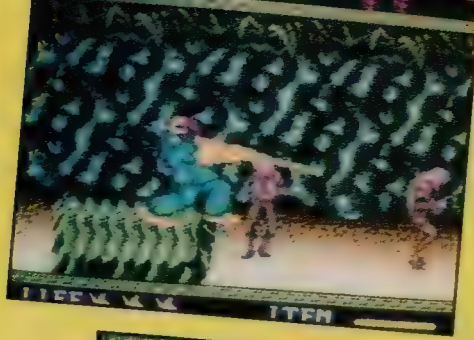


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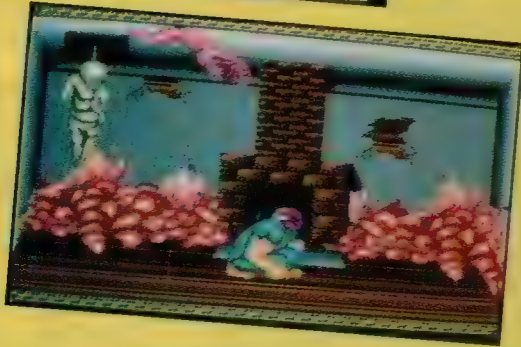
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Splatterhouse is comprised of seven levels, which the player must hack and slash through.



A recent study at Fairleigh Dickinson University in Madison, New Jersey, agrees that video games are "pre-eminently violent." But the definition of violence is really a debate in semantics. For instance, according to Dr. Judith Waters, a social psychology professor who conducted the study, even checkers is violent because the game involves winners and losers.

"Kids feel impotent," says the doctor, "and with so many things in their lives for which they have no control, these games are a healthy way of releasing tension."

graphic, not violent

Because the state of the art is the Genesis system, which boasted the true 16-bit graphics and game play in the marketplace prior to the release of SNK's Geo, Genesis adventure games may be the first choice for seekers of realistic action.

But the trend is necessarily toward violence, says Al Nilsen, Sega's director of marketing. "Our number-one title right now is *Pat Riley* football, and it doesn't have any blood in it."

Nilsen can't deny that violent action is right at the bend for Genesis. "*TechnoCop* [was]

out in December, and it's true that the arcade version of the game is pretty bloody," he says. "But *TechnoCop* is the exception rather than the rule. The basic game is action, as opposed to twitching hands being twitched on screen, and it's a fun game."

Anticipating the controversy that's certain to follow *TechnoCop*, Razor Soft placed a warning on the box that reads: "Attention! Action scenes can be violent. Not suggested for children under 12 years of age."

"I'm not pushing ultra-violence," says Razor Soft's Shelley, "this is just more realistic violence—like the movies."

different strokes for different folks

Depending upon who is reading this article (whether you're a parent or not), you're likely to have your own notions about the violent aspect of video games. The word "violence" itself has different connotations to different people, as we learned from Dr. Waters (who still can't

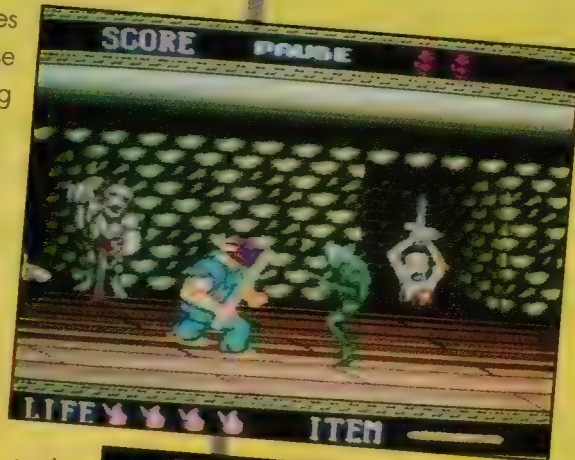
put all the pieces from the case of the girl who hid from her kidnappers set she hid from her kidnappers).

Violence in video games was an inevitable conflict that was bound to come up sooner or later, and the fact that these games will get more violent and more detailed—as graphics improve is a foregone conclusion.

But kids have been playing cowboy and Indians for over

a century. It's not our imaginations or more that are changing—it's just our technology.

NEC's Splatterhouse, as the name implies, is one of the bloodiest video games ever made.





Monday December 13, 1999

Zombie Hoards Attack U.S.

Strange samurai
and heading to New
York City.

I. C. GOOLS, Times Staff
ter

NEW YORK--What appeared to be a harmless meteorite crashing in the Nevada desert has turned out to be Darc Seed, an evil alien creature with horrible powers. By shooting powerful magnetic rays, Darc Seed has turned the helpless nation into zombie slaves and has brought the Statue of Liberty to life to do his dirty work.

There Goes the Neighborhood

Mrs. Emma Nuttz of Brooklyn had this to say about the situation. "Just when it seemed safe for decent folks to walk the streets again along comes this Darc Seed with his gang of Zombie hooligans and there goes the neighborhood. And if that wasn't bad enough, it seems the only way to defeat this ruffian is by totally destroying everything in sight. Now there really goes the neighborhood!"

Mr. I.M. Sickentired of the Bronx added, "As if we didn't have enough stinkin' garbage on the streets already. Between the freakin' wino's and the blasted beggars and all the other louses already fouling up this miserable town...and now these sleazeball

zombies!! It's enough to make me want to move to freakin' Los Angeles with all the other fruits and nuts!!!

Mayor Heminhaw immediately called an emergency press conference where he read the following prepared statement. "I um, er, ahem, ah, I am doing everything, ah, er, er, humanly possible to see to it that ah, this situation er, um, this terrible situation ah, comes to a ah, ahem, a swift and , er, um, um, a swift and satisfactory close. I er, er, um, have no further er, er, comment at this time. Thank you".

ZOMBIE NATION:

Ground Shaking NES™ Action

Zombie Nation is a ground shaking action/shooting game for the Nintendo Entertainment System®. The object of the game is to wreak total destruction on everything you see by firing powerful projectiles (it's a dark and dirty job, but somebody's got to do it). Meanwhile, you need to rescue as many zombie hostages as you can in order to gain enough strength for the ultimate showdown with Darc Seed (he's toast!).

ZOMBIE NATION:

Devastating Graphics and Pounding Sound Effects

Zombie Nation's graphics are so devastatingly realistic you'll almost be tempted not to demolish them (yeah right!). And the relentlessly pounding sound effects will make you feel like you're right in the middle of the action hammering away at skyscrapers, mountains, and everything else that crosses your path.. So don't just stand there like a Zombie, get your copy now!



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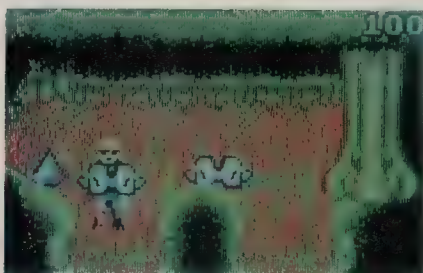
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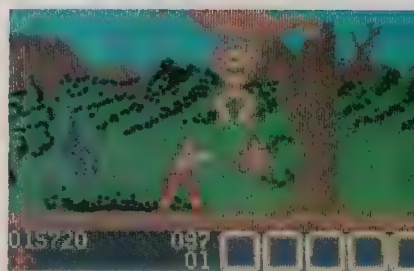
The Following Too Graphic For



Why mow the lawn when you can bomb oncoming planes and destroy secret military bases in nine action missions with **BLUE LIGHTNING**.



After dinner, you can always battle maggots, blood-flies and drools in the dangerous 8 player game — **SLIME WORLD**.



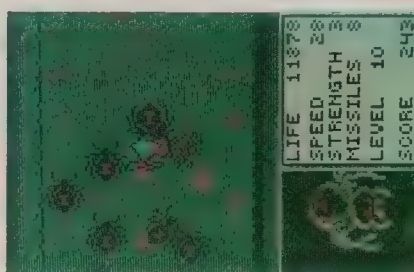
RYGAR, the 2 player arcade hit that pits you against ferocious beasts, hideous demons or worse, your best friend.



PAPERBOY. Fling papers at non-subscribers, race your bicycle on people's lawns — in other words, the ultimate afterschool job.



RAMPAGE. Become a 60 ft. beast, demolish buildings and eat tanks as an army attempts to destroy you. Up to 4 players can take part in the destruction.



Encounter loathsome beings. Escape from horrible creatures. It's you against the evil empire in the game of **GAUNTLET**.

Warm up the brain cells. Condition those fingers. Break out the antacid.

The new Lynx cartridges are here.

Twelve of the roughest, toughest, most challenging game cartridges in the Cosmos.



And now you can play them on earth. In fact, anywhere on earth. Because the Lynx is the world's first portable, color video game system.

With its totally unique 16 bit graphics engine,

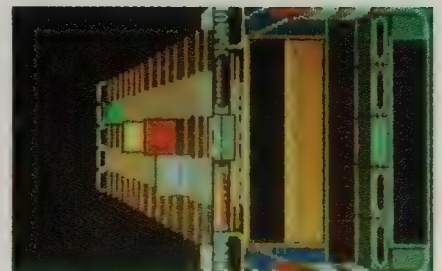
Scenes May Be Adults.



ROBO SQUASH. The ultimate paddle game. The goal is to squash the enemy and line up four globes in a row to win. But be careful, three splats and you're out.



XENOPHOBE. Trapped in a space station, you must destroy the aliens. Side-scrolling adventure for up to 4 players.



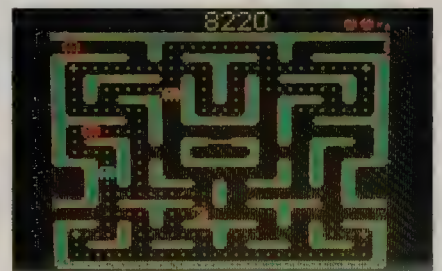
KLAX. Maneuver your platform. Catch the falling bricks. Stack 'em for points. And try to do it all before your dad asks to borrow it.



ROAD BLASTER. Drive and avoid mines, exploding towers and enemy vehicles for points and make it through 50 levels. Great to play in the back of the car.



It's a galactic shoot out between you and aliens in the 4 player game **ZAXXON MERCENARY**. Your only hope is to kill them all or break for lunch.



Help **MS. PACMAN** escape the marauding ghosts by guiding her through multiple mazes gobbling up dots, energizers, fruits and pretzels.

the Lynx lets you play arcade quality games that really look like arcade games. In 4 channel sound. Play by yourself. With one opponent. Two opponents. Three opponents. Or you can even link up with seven other players on certain games.

So if you don't already own a Lynx,

you better hurry. Because they're going fast. And so are all these game cartridges.

Visit the videogame section in your favorite store now.

Before they're wiped out.



for the Nintendo Entertainment



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STRATEGY GUIDE, PART I BY DONN NAUERT

VEIGUES

TACTICAL GLADIATOR

Mysterious alien beings have invaded Earth. Witnessing a strength that is far beyond anything ever seen before, the Federation Army retreats to analyze a captured enemy weapon so that they may find some clue as to what might defeat this ominous invader. After three long years, they finally come up with a weapon that might stand a chance against the onslaught—and begin to prepare for what could be the last counterattack, "Operation Last Rally."

Now you're the Earth's last chance as you take the controls of the awesome fighting machine known as "Veigues." Your mission is to defeat as many enemy invaders as possible as you work through the ten areas, and try to reach the enemy headquarters. We have provided maps of the first five areas in this issue. The last five will appear in the April issue.





HELPFUL HINTS

ALWAYS WATCH THE DEMONSTRATION SCREENS. THEY PROVIDE USEFUL TIPS.

- ALWAYS TRY TO DEFEAT AS MANY ENEMIES AS POSSIBLE. THIS WILL ALLOW YOU TO INCREASE THE LEVELS OF YOUR WEAPONS AT THE END OF EACH AREA.
- THE BEST OFFENSIVE AND DEFENSIVE TACTICS WOULD BE TO BUILD UP YOUR VULCAN (BODY) AND SHIELD AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE, THEN WORK ON YOUR VERNIER AND FIELD PUNCH (LEFT ARM). WHEN YOU GET INTO A JAM WITH ENEMIES THAT DO A LOT OF DAMAGE, TWIST AND TURN YOUR WAY OUT OF IT.
- WATCH YOUR RADAR AS MUCH AS YOU CAN.
- TO CONTINUE, DURING THE "PRESENTED BY VICTOR MUSICAL INDUSTRIES, INC." SCREEN, ON THE CONTROL PAD, PRESS AND HOLD DOWN, LEFT AND **SELECT** AT THE

SAME TIME UNTIL THE TITLE SCREEN APPEARS. WHEN THE TITLE SCREEN APPEARS, IT SHOULD SAY "CONTINUE MODE." TO DETERMINE HOW MANY CONTINUES YOU WILL HAVE, TAKE YOUR SCORE AT THE FIRST TIME YOUR GAME IS OVER AND DIVIDE BY 1,000,000 POINTS, THEN ADD THREE.

- FOR A MUSIC MODE, DURING THE "PRESENTED BY" SCREEN, PRESS AND HOLD UP, LEFT AND **SELECT** AT THE SAME TIME UNTIL THE TITLE SCREEN APPEARS. ON THE TITLE SCREEN, "MUSIC MODE" SHOULD APPEAR. PRESS 1 TO SELECT THE TUNES.

- FOR AN EASY MODE, DURING THE "PRESENTED BY" SCREEN, PRESS AND HOLD UP, RIGHT AND **SELECT** UNTIL THE TITLE SCREEN APPEARS. YOU SHOULD SEE "EASY MODE" IN THE MIDDLE OF THE TITLE SCREEN. THE ONLY NOTICEABLE DIFFERENCE IS THAT, IN THIS MODE, YOU'LL RECEIVE DOUBLE THE UNITS AT THE END OF EACH AREA.

Area 1

IN THIS AREA, YOU'LL START OFF IN THE RUINS OF AN ABANDONED CITY. THE FIRST ENEMY YOU'LL FACE IS A RED ALIEN THAT

COULD PASS AS A MECHANICAL FROG. ONCE IT LANDS, IT'LL TAKE A SHOT AT YOU. DON'T WORRY—IT'S A PRETTY EASY FOE.



THE BLACK MISSILES ALSO HAVE FROG LEGS BUT ARE EVEN LESS OF A PROBLEM: THEY CAN PASS THROUGH YOU WITHOUT DOING DAMAGE. THE FIRST AREA IS PRIMARILY MADE UP OF THESE TWO CHARACTERS AND

IS PROBABLY HERE TO HELP YOU BUILD UP YOUR POWERS AT THE END OF THE AREA. THE ENEMIES WILL ATTACK IN GROUPS OF FOUR AND WILL EITHER LAND BRIEFLY OR FLY BY OVERHEAD.

EVERYBODY GETS INTO THE ACT.



THESE GUYS LOOK LIKE METAL KOALA BEARS WITHOUT BODIES. THEY'LL ENTER THE SCREEN FROM ALL DIRECTIONS, AND AS THEY LEAVE THE SCREEN, THEY'LL TURN AND FIRE AT YOU. THEIR SHOTS AREN'T THAT

POWERFUL SO THERE ISN'T A NEED TO AVOID THEM. BESIDES, YOU MIGHT MISS ONE OF THEM AND LOWER THE NUMBER OF UNITS YOU CAN GET AT THE END.

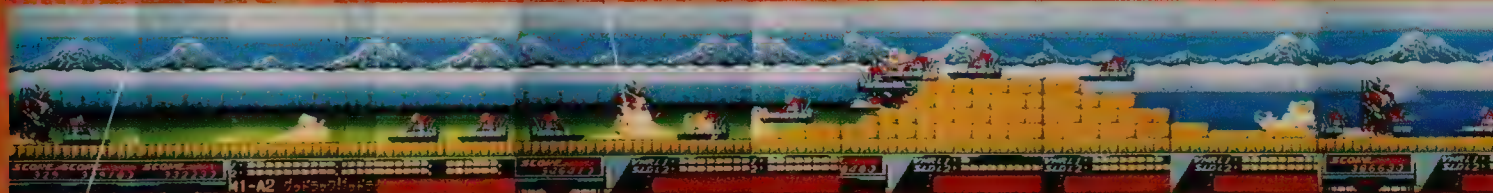
THESE MINIATURIZED MISSILE LAUNCHERS ON TRACKS WILL SPEED TO THE OPPOSITE SIDE OF THE SCREEN AND THEN RETURN TO



Area 2

APPROXIMATELY HALF OF THE WORK IN THIS SECTION IS DEALING WITH THESE PESTS.

JUST STAY IN THE CENTER WITH YOUR VULCAN AIMED DOWN ALL THE WAY.



IN THIS AREA, YOU GET A LITTLE FRESH AIR IN THE GREAT OUTDOORS.

BOMB, BOMBS AND MORE BOMBS.

WATCH OUT FOR THE HOMING MISSILES (THE BLUE BOMBS). OUCH.



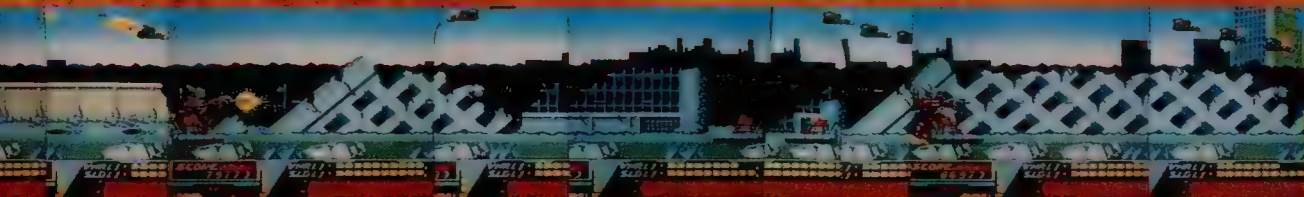
STATIONARY BOMBS THAT ACT LIKE MINES ARE SCATTERED THROUGHOUT THIS AREA AND OTHERS.

A SNEAK ATTACK.



RED MECHANICAL FROGS LIE IN WAIT.

REMEMBER TO TRY FOR AS MANY KILLS AS POSSIBLE. THIS WILL ALLOW YOU TO GET BETTER ABILITIES AT THE END OF THE AREA.



THE SIDE FROM WHICH THEY APPEARED. A GOOD DOSE OF VULCAN SHOT SHOULD DO THE TRICK.

End Boss-Area 1

FROM THE RIGHT SIDE OF THE SCREEN, HE'LL MOVE UP AND DOWN SHOOTING THREE-WAY SHOTS AT YOU. TO DESTROY HIM, YOU MUST HIT THE BLUE SPOT BELOW THE RED MOUTH. USING THE VULCAN SHOT, YOU SHOULD BE ABLE TO DEFEAT HIM IN NO TIME. TWISTING AND TURNING IN THE LOWER-LEFT CORNER AS THE SHOTS APPROACH YOU SHOULD GET YOU OUT WITH LITTLE (IF ANY) DAMAGE DONE. TRY PLACING YOUR UNITS SO THAT YOU WILL ENTER AREA 2 WITH THE LEVEL OF YOUR WEAPONS AT ONE IN FIELD PUNCH (LEFT ARM), THREE IN VULCAN (BODY), ONE IN VERNIER AND TWO IN SHIELD.

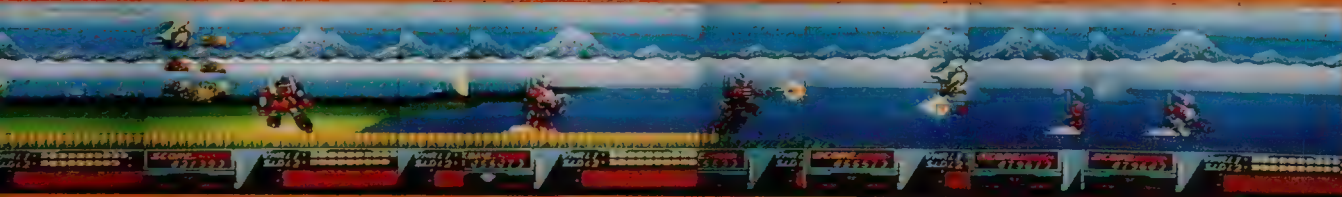


THE RED FROGS HAD TO SPOIL ALL THE FUN.

WOULD SOMEONE LIKE TO NAME THIS THING—SOMETHING OTHER THAN A MECHANICAL FLYING DRAGON? TRY TO SNEAK UNDER HIM AS HE COMES AFTER YOU.

THE RED FROGS ACT AMPHIBIOUS.

DON'T WORRY ABOUT MAKING IT WITHOUT GETTING HIT. HE ONLY DOES ONE BAR (OUT OF TEN) WORTH OF DAMAGE. THERE ARE THREE OF THEM IN THIS SECTION...



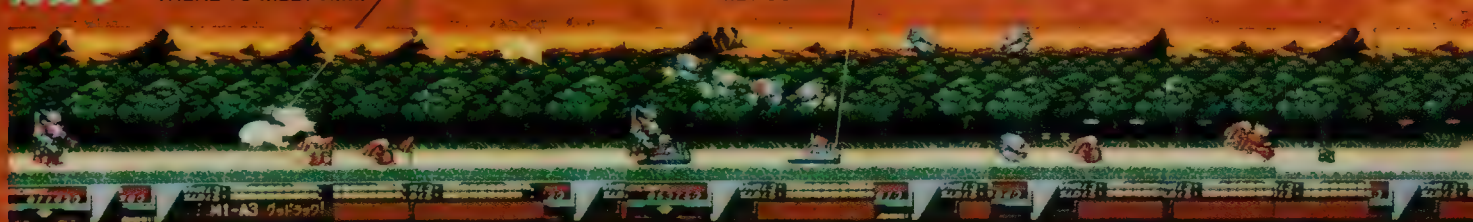
...THE LAST ONE COMES OUT OF THE WATER HERE.

GET READY FOR A BUNCH OF THESE GUYS. THEY'LL COME AT YOU HARD AND FAST. THE VULCAN, ONCE AGAIN, SEEMS TO BE THE BEST WEAPON.



IN THIS AREA YOU'LL FIND VEIGUES STARTING IN A FOREST, AND THE MECHANICAL FROGS AND KOALA BEARS ARE THERE TO MEET HIM.

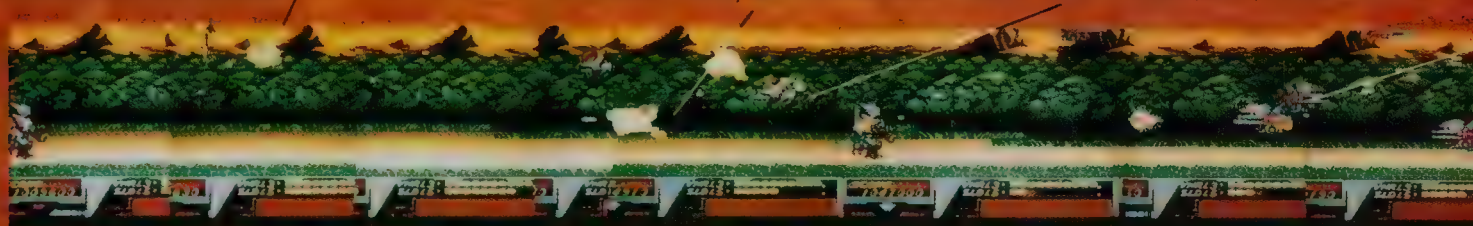
THE FIRST SECTION OF THIS AREA PUTS YOU UP AGAINST ALMOST EVERY ENEMY YOU'VE MET SO FAR.



WHAT COULD THIS BE? A FLYING GAS MASK, MAYBE? USE THE VULCAN.

A NEW CHARACTER THAT LOOKS LIKE THE MECHANICAL FROG, ONLY WITHOUT THE LEGS.

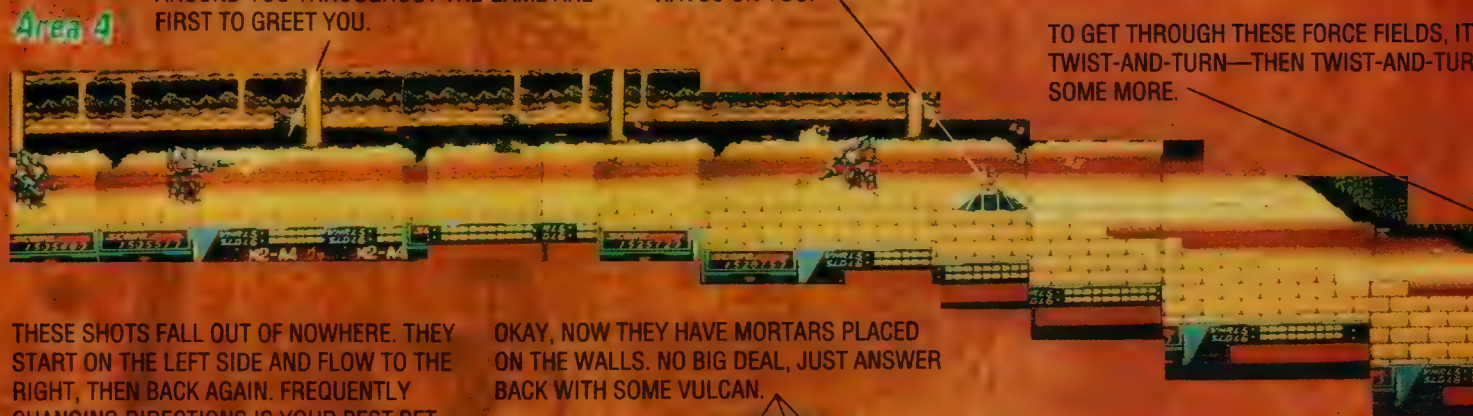
USE A COMBINATION OF VULCAN AND BEAR GUN TO TAKE CARE OF THESE GUYS.



THIS IS THE BEGINNING OF THE UNDERGROUND PORTION OF THE GAME. THE BLACK MISSILES THAT HAVE BUZZED AROUND YOU THROUGHOUT THE GAME ARE FIRST TO GREET YOU.

GENERATORS FOUND IN THIS AREA SHOULD BE DESTROYED AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE, OR ELSE THE FLOATING MINES WILL WREAK HAVOC ON YOU.

TO GET THROUGH THESE FORCE FIELDS, IT TWIST-AND-TURN—THEN TWIST-AND-TURN SOME MORE.



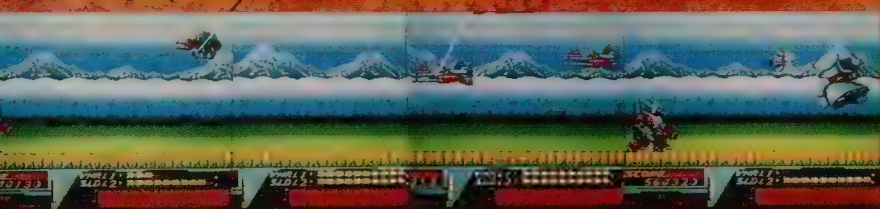
THESE SHOTS FALL OUT OF NOWHERE. THEY START ON THE LEFT SIDE AND FLOW TO THE RIGHT, THEN BACK AGAIN. FREQUENTLY CHANGING DIRECTIONS IS YOUR BEST BET.

OKAY, NOW THEY HAVE MORTARS PLACED ON THE WALLS. NO BIG DEAL, JUST ANSWER BACK WITH SOME VULCAN.



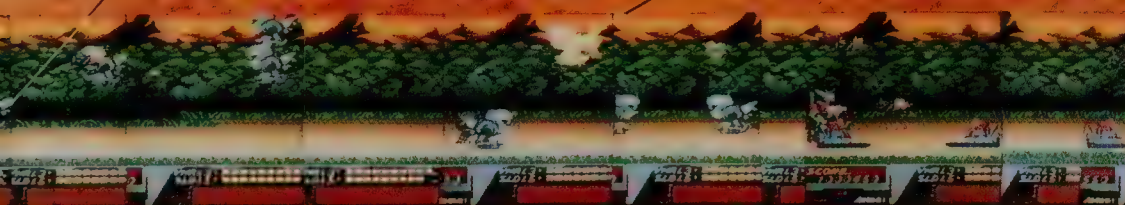
THEY KEEP COMING AND COMING.

USING THE VULCAN AT AN ANGLE GOING FROM THE LOWER-LEFT TO THE UPPER-RIGHT CORNER SEEMS TO BE THE MOST EFFECTIVE DEFENSE.

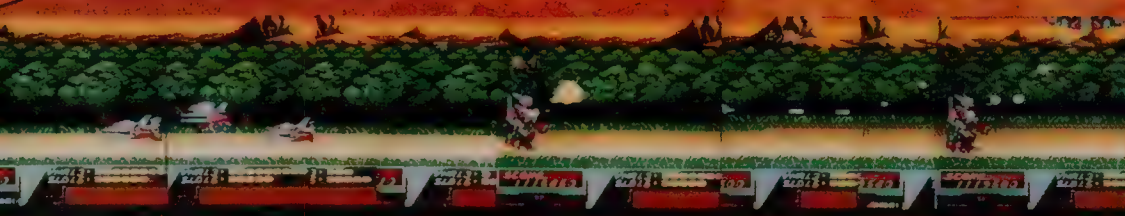


THIS NEW ENEMY LOOKS LIKE IT COULD BE A METAL ROOSTER WITH A BAD HAIRCUT.

AGAIN, THE VULCAN SEEMS TO HANDLE THEM EASILY.



THESE GUYS RETURN. WATCH FOR THE ONE THAT ENTERS THE SCREEN IN THE LOWER RIGHT. HE'LL NAIL YOU EVERY TIME.



End Boss-Area 2

THIS GUY STAYS ON THE RIGHT SIDE OF THE SCREEN AS WELL, BUT WHEN HE GETS EVEN WITH VEIGUES, HE'LL SHOOT A MISSILE. AS HE REACHES THE BOTTOM AND FIRES HIS MISSILE, JUMP. BE CAREFUL: THE MISSILE RETURNS TO HIM LIKE A BOOMERANG. THE WEAK SPOT ON THIS GUY IS THE RED SPOT STICKING OUT OF HIS FOREHEAD. TRY PLACING YOUR UNITS SO THAT YOU WILL ENTER AREA 3 WITH THE LEVELS OF YOUR WEAPONS AT ONE FOR FIELD PUNCH, FOUR FOR VULCAN, THREE FOR VERNIER AND FIVE FOR SHIELD.

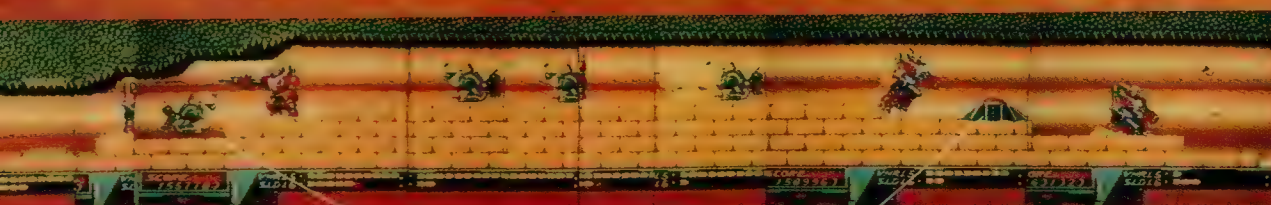
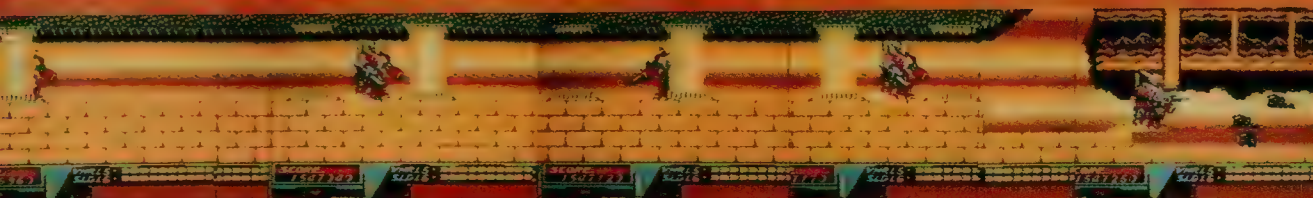


End Boss-Area 3

THERE ARE ACTUALLY THREE PARTS TO THIS BOSS. THE FIRST THING HE'LL DO IS PEPPER YOU WITH SHOTS. THIS IS WHERE YOU BETTER HAVE MASTERED (OR AT LEAST BE FAIRLY GOOD AT) CHANGING DIRECTIONS. AFTER HITTING HIM WITH THE VULCAN, HE'LL OPEN UP AND EXPOSE A LASER. THE BEST THING TO DO IS START IN ONE CORNER, AND MOVE TO THE OPPOSITE ONE WHILE

AVOIDING HIS SHOTS. WAIT UNTIL THE SHOTS ARE ABOUT TO HIT YOU BEFORE CHANGING DIRECTIONS AND CORNERS. THE LASER, IF YOU HAVE BEEN SUCCESSFUL AT DODGING THE BULLETS, SHOULDN'T POSE A PROBLEM AS LONG AS YOU HAVE THE VULCAN TRAINED ON IT. AFTER YOU DESTROY THE LASER, THE TWO ENDS WILL COME TOGETHER AND START CHASING YOU. DODGE AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE WHILE BLASTING THEM WITH THE

VULCAN. AT THE END OF THIS AREA, HERE'S HOW I LIKE TO HAVE THE LEVELS OF THE WEAPONS: ONE FOR FIELD PUNCH, SIX FOR VULCAN, FIVE FOR VERNIER AND SIX FOR SHIELD. REMEMBER, ANY EXTRA SHIELDS MEAN THAT MUCH MORE BONUS POINTS AT THE END OF THE AREAS, WHICH TRANSLATES INTO MORE CONTINUES. YOU SHOULD START AREA 4 WITH AT LEAST FOUR VERNIER AND FIVE FOR VULCAN.

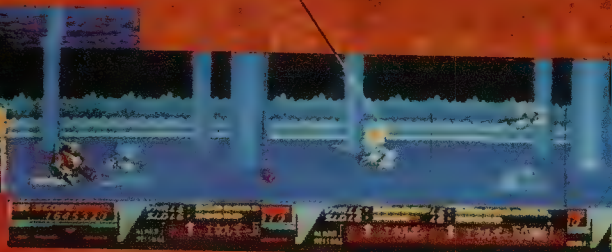


THE ROOSTERS ARE BACK. CHANGE DIRECTIONS AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE WHILE FIRING.

THERE ARE THREE GENERATORS DOWN THESE STEPS, ALTHOUGH ONLY TWO ARE SHOWN.

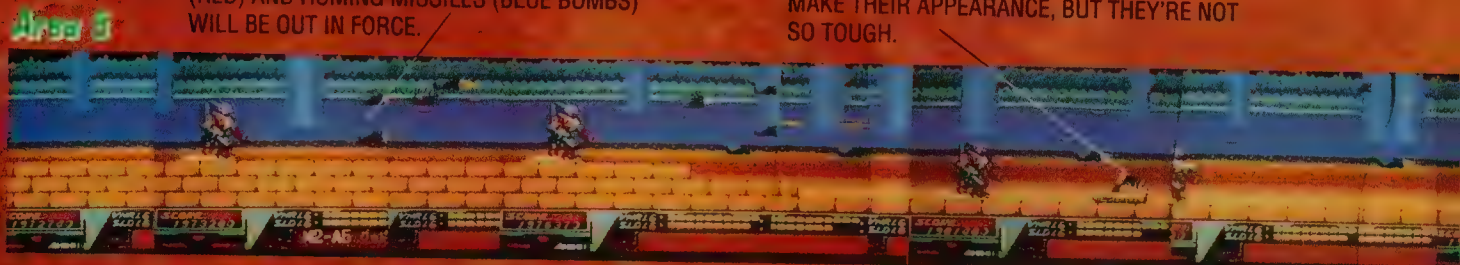


WELL, YOU'VE FOUND THE UNDERGROUND LAKE AND THE WATERPROOF KOALA BEARS.



AT THE START OF THIS AREA, YOU'LL CONTINUE THROUGH THE UNDERGROUND LAKE WHERE BOTH THE STATIONARY BOMBS (RED) AND HOMING MISSILES (BLUE BOMBS) WILL BE OUT IN FORCE.

NOW MINIATURE GOLD MISSILE LAUNCHERS MAKE THEIR APPEARANCE, BUT THEY'RE NOT SO TOUGH.



WALL MORTARS ON THE WAY DOWN.



NOW MEET THE BLACK MECHANICAL FROGS. THEIR SHOTS DO A LITTLE MORE DAMAGE, BUT OTHER THAN THAT THEY'RE NOT THAT BIG OF A MENACE.

THIS IS WHERE ALL THAT VERNIER WILL FIRST COME IN HANDY BECAUSE...

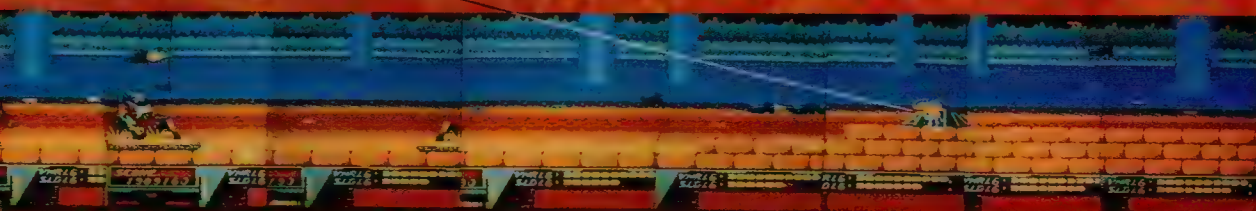


YOU'LL FIND FOUR GENERATORS AT THE TOP OF THESE STAIRS.



End Boss-Area 4

THIS FUTURISTIC KNIGHT CARRYING A LANCE WILL BOB UP AND DOWN FIVE TIMES THEN CHARGE TOWARD YOU. SIMPLY JUMP UP AND STAY IN THE AIR UNTIL HE MOVES BACK TO THE RIGHT PART OF THE SCREEN. AFTER THE FIRST CHARGE, HE'LL ONLY BOB TWICE BEFORE MAKING HIS MOVE. IF YOUR VULCAN IS AT LEVEL 6, HE SHOULD ONLY BE ABLE TO CHARGE TWICE; ON THE THIRD CHARGE HE SHOULD BE DEFEATED. AT THIS POINT YOU COULD RAISE THE LEVEL OF YOUR VERNIER UP TO SIX AND YOUR FIELD PUNCH UP TO TWO, OR YOU COULD KEEP YOUR FIELD PUNCH AT ONE, AND SAVE YOUR UNITS FOR LATER.



THESE THINGS LOOK LIKE COMPUTER CHIPS TURNED SIDWAYS.



...THE LAVA IS DEADLY.

EVEN THE VOLCANOS IN THE BACKGROUND GET INTO THE ACT BY SHOOTING LAVA ROCKS AT YOU.



End Boss-Area 5

THIS GUY, WHO RESEMBLES AN ARMED ARMADILLO, WILL SHOOT A TRIO OF LASER BLASTS AT YOU FOLLOWED BY FOUR HOMING MISSILES. MY ADVICE WOULD BE TO AVOID THE LASER SHOTS, DON'T WORRY ABOUT THE HOMING MISSILES AND KEEP

THAT VULCAN A-PUMPIN'. THIS BOSS CAN BE DEFEATED AFTER APPROXIMATELY FIVE LASER SHOTS. IF ALL GOES WELL, YOU SHOULD HAVE AT LEAST BETWEEN FOUR AND A HALF AND FIVE SHIELDS REMAINING. USE YOUR UNITS TO BUILD UP YOUR FIELD PUNCH AND/OR SHIELD.





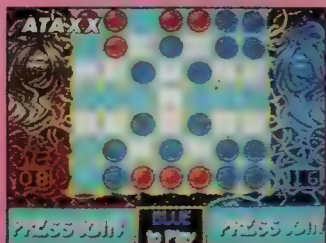
The Amusement & Music Operators Association (AMOA) has traditionally held their annual show, called the Expo, in Chicago. This year, however, it decided to travel due south to the mouth of the Mississippi, selecting New Orleans for its show Expo '90.

The show featured most of the best games of 1990 and also included some new titles that are either sequels to games, such as *Final Lap II*, or look like they could be, such as *Carrier Airwing (U.N. Squadron)*. Expo '90 could have been renamed "Expo '90: The Show of Sequels."

In the February issue, we took a look at the games by companies, starting with A (American Laser Games) through K (Konami). In this issue we'll finish the show coverage with companies from L (Leland) through Z—okay, more like W (Williams).

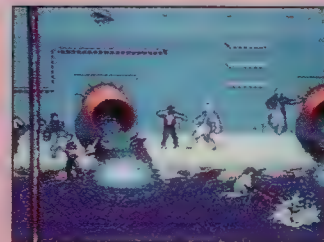
Leland

Ataxx—Ataxx is a strategy game that could be called a fantasy version of *Othello*. You can play a one-player game against the computer or a two-player game against each other, as you try to attack your opponent and be the one with the most "globs" at the end of the level.



Brute Force—Play one of three members of a three-man team that is on a personal vendetta to put crime in its place. Battle skinheads and Colombian drug lords in this

game that includes an eight-way joystick and backdrops of 60 scenes.



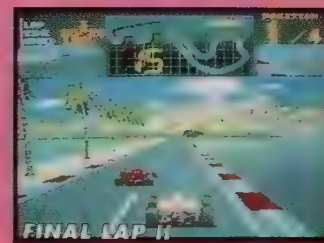
Brute Force turns the player into a video vigilante, battling the forces of racism and illegal narcotics.

Namco

Steel Gunner—This is Namco's latest entry to the growing list of upright gun games.

Dragon Saber—A sequel to *Dragon Spirit*, it lives up to its predecessor in difficulty, game play and more. This game is a must for all hard-core gamers.

Final Lap II—A familiar name in driving games, this sequel features all the items you found in *Final Lap*. In this new version, you can choose one of four different courses.





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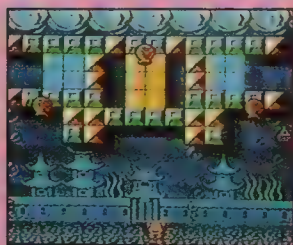
Nintendo

Nintendo, keeping pace with its home system, has released some familiar titles for the PlayChoice arcade system. The titles include *Nintendo World Cup* (Soccer), *Rad Racer II*, *MegaMan 3*, *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles 2* (with new screens), *Solar Jetman* and *Dr. Mario*.

Romstar

Snow Bros.—Romstar continues to show the game that is best described as a modern-day *Bubble Bobble*.

Thunder & Lightning—After angering the Thunder Warrior, you, as Mr. Chin, must use your demo ball and thunder & lightning stick to escape from the Thirty Walls of Regret in a game that uses the classic *Arkanoid* format. (Look in the video-game reviews elsewhere in this issue for a look at the NES version of *Thunder & Lightning*.)



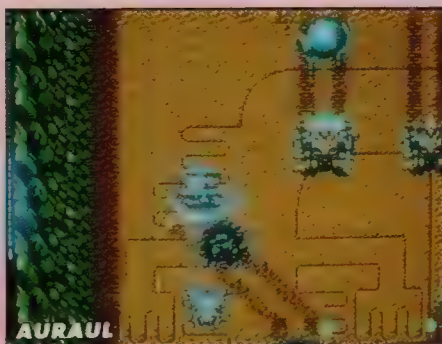
Out Zone—It's the 21st century, and you have been sent to a remote outpost far out in space. Your mission: To rescue your comrades and shuttle craft that have been lost in the Out Zone.



Romstar's *Thunder & Lightning* (top) is available in NES format. *Out Zone* (bottom) is a vertically scrolling action game.

Sega

Auraul—Maneuver your aircraft through 3-D-like scenes, destroying as many enemies as possible. In this first-person game, you not only must be aware of the enemies in front of you but also behind. Mastering the 360-degree rapid fire guns are a must.



GP Rider—The latest in the realism-oriented driving games, *GP Rider* incorporates a linkage system that will allow two-player simultaneous racing.

Laser Ghost—An alien life-form has infested the city and kidnapped a little

old lady. Become part of a three-man team that has set out to rid the city of the creature and save Granny. Players will be taken through haunted houses, cemeteries, sewer systems and more in this upright gun game.

R-360—The latest in simulator technology to hit the arcades, this game currently uses a specially designed G-LOC machine that allows you to experience gaming as never before—upside-down, for

instance. Taking *Galaxy Force* one step further, the pod you play in can rotate in any direction depending on your control maneuvers. *R-360* is more of an amusement-park ride than an arcade machine.

SNK

Cyber Lip (for the Neo•Geo)—You're on a mission to find the evil "Cyber Lip" in an effort to destroy him before he destroys you. Your mission will take you through seven futuristic stages filled with androids and cyborgs.

League Bowling—League Bowling features three different styles of play. With the "multi-link," four cabinets can be linked so that up to eight players can compete against each other.

Blue's Journey—In what could be the ultimate environmentalist's game, Blue and his companion, Shadow, must work their way through seven worlds (with three stages each), ridding the land of pollution. If they succeed, Blue will get to marry the princess of the kingdom.

Sega's R-360 brings arcade-simulator technology to new boundaries.



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Puzzled (for the Neo•Geo)—This game has ten stages, each with six floors, where you must arrange falling blocks so that they form a single line. When a series of lines is formed, the character is released from the bottom to advance to the next floor.

The Super Spy (for the Neo•Geo)—The leader of a terrorist group has threatened to use his special bomb to blow up the world. As the Super Spy, you must work your way through the 16 floors of an office building to save the day in this first-person-perspective game.

SNK also showed five new Neo•Geo games that were not completed and/or didn't have a storyline at the time of this writing. The game titles included *King of the Monsters*, *Burning Fight*, *Sengoka*, *Ghost Fighter* and *Alpha Mission II*.

Taito

D3 Boss—Taito's latest entry into the simulator wars is not as much a game as it is a ride. When you step inside, be ready to take the roller coaster ride of your life.

Space Gun—This space-alien version of *Operation Wolf* places you as part of a special off-world commando unit that has been sent out into space to investigate strange messages from a colonized space station. Along the way you encounter the cause of the strange circumstances on a cargo ship headed for Earth.

Air Inferno—This simulator is the ultimate in helicopter rescue. There are a total of six rounds. The player will spend the first two rounds (the beginner levels) learning the controls. Then it's off fighting tanker and skyscraper fires. You also have to rescue people stranded on a volcanic island and lost in a desert.

Majestic Twelve: The Space Invaders Part II—They're back! After their invasion ten

years ago, a special top-secret order, the Majestic-12, was established to take defensive measures in the event the pesky *Space Invaders* ever returned. Now it's up to you to stop them.

Tecmo

Strato Fighter—Take the helm of an Aero Tactic Fighter to do battle in new dimensions in Tecmo's new space shooter.

Super Pinball Action—Tecmo's new video pinball features four different playfields and all aspects of real pinball including bumpers and spinners.

Williams

Hit the Ice—Williams continues their zany sports series, this time with a loony hockey game. One to four players choose their teams from a roster of Video Hockey League all-stars. The game features all the aspects of real hockey including foghorn blasts, sirens and organ music.



Smash TV—This hit for Williams was present at the show. In *Smash TV* contestants battle it out for big bucks and prizes in what can be best described as a video-game version of *The Running Man*.

Riverboat Gambler—Pinball players get to try their hand at such favorite casino games as blackjack, slots, roulette and five-card poker in typical Williams fashion. The game features a 3,000,000-point bonus and a second-chance extra-ball feature.

You've Been Framed!

Agent Frank McBain is dead...but why did they pin it on you? You've just 96 hours to find out...crack an international spy ring...and prevent an **INTERNATIONAL DISASTER**.

You're American agent Mason Powers and you've just intercepted an ultra secret message about an international terrorist group. Just as you're about to brief CIA Section Chief, Frank McBain, everything goes black...and you wake up in a remote prison hospital in Turkey...with no memory of what happened and charged with the murder of Frank McBain!

Who set you up? Who is trying to kill you? And why do you feel such *intense urgency*? The *Countdown* has begun...and you'd better find the answers fast.

If you break out of the hospital you'll set out on an *interactive adventure* of intrigue and espionage taking you from *Istanbul to Paris*...with both agents and terrorists in hot pursuit. Interview different characters which converse, animate and respond (some actually talk!)...use your hand held computer to search for key evidence...gain valuable clues in realistic *Motion Graphics* flashbacks!

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Countdown is brought to you by Access Software...the same madmen who brought you Mean Streets. You'll experience *movie-quality Motion Graphics* action...with 256-color screens that bring new meaning to VGA. Add *RealSound™* high-quality digitized sound effects and you've got an interactive movie that will involve you totally...mind, body and soul.

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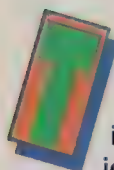
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here's a big news item from the world of electronic-gaming fandom this month: A major new fanzine is being born!

Four experienced fanzine editors—Edward Karpp, Edward Finkler, Mike Ciletti and Russ Robinson—are going to combine their efforts to produce *CyberBeat*. This is important both because it gives fandom the prospect of another first-rate publication and because it points out the advantages of cooperation among fans.

You don't have to edit a fanzine to participate in fandom. Fans can write articles, reviews and letters of comment for other fanzines. If you're an artist, the field is wide open and waiting! I don't know a single fanzine that wouldn't be much better with a few cartoons.

So congratulations to the four musketeers for their bold step. I'll tell you about the first issue as soon as it rolls off the press. Meanwhile, let's take a look at some outstanding fanzines that are already available.

Before we get to this month's reviews, there is one correction to be made. Last month the price for Lane Rice's *The Subversive Sprite* was not listed. It comes out monthly and costs \$1.

WHAT IS FANDOM?

Electronic-gaming fandom is an informal network of people who share a knowledgeable interest in interactive electronic entertainment. Fanzines are the amateur publications that these fans produce as forums for the exchange views on all aspects of the topic.

Getting involved is as easy as sending for sample copies of some of the titles mentioned each month in *Fandango*. Most fanzines are available for a letter of comment on the previous issue, contribution of artwork or written material, trade for other fanzines or, of course, cash.



REVIEWS OF RECENT ELECTRONIC GAMING FANZINES

by Arnie Katz

Video Views #1

Ulrich Kempf

Patterson Road, R.D. 5, Box 212
Watertown, NY 13601

\$1.25—Irregular
10 pages.

Despite some minor first-issue glitches—like not prominently displaying the address, price, editorial staff and frequency on the contents page—this well-illustrated publication is the best new fanzine received this month. The 200-word reviews are

intelligent, and the accompanying rating system guarantees that each piece makes a definite critical statement. If you're a gamer, rush your \$1.25 to Ulrich.

CyberDrome #6

Ed Karpp

P.O. Box 317

La Jolla, CA 92038

\$1—No schedule stated
Nine pages

I don't know if *CyberDrome* will continue or become the hub of *CyberBeat*. Either way, you can't lose by sending Ed a buck for an issue of this outstanding review-oriented fanzine. Detailed examinations of a wide range of games, ratings for at least a hundred more and a very provocative editorial about the dangers of a fanzine glut are the major highlights this time. *CyberDrome* is one of my personal favorites, and I think most video gamers will appreciate the straightforward style of analysis.

The Lynx

Phil Patton

131 Dake Ave.

Santa Cruz, CA 95062

\$0.40—Monthly
Five pages

Phil forgot to number the current issue, but he shows a fairly steady editorial hand apart from that. Coverage includes the Atari ST and Lynx, two systems that don't get much space in most professional magazines. There's a lot of stuff packed into five pages, including a lengthy review of *Devon Aire*, an opinion column by David Kimbo and a Lynx question box.

ATTENTION FANZINE READERS

If you want to see sample copies of the many current top fanzines—or if you're a fanzine publisher looking for names for a mailing list—VIDEOGAMES & COMPUTER ENTERTAINMENT can help you. The Fanzine Readers List is available to any fanzine editor who sends a self-addressed stamped envelope. Anyone can be included on the list by simply writing and asking. In either case, the address is Arnie Katz, 330 S. Decatur, Suite 152, Las Vegas, NV 89107.

MEGAGAMING

A sample copy of *Megagaming*, the biweekly "Voice of Electronic Gaming," is available for \$1 from Arnie Katz, Bill Kunkel and Joyce Worley (330 S. Decatur, Suite 152, Las Vegas, NV 89107). Each issue contains news, previews, fanzine critiques, a forum for fan-oriented questions, columns and more.

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ON THE ROAD AGAIN:



A Comprehensive Guide
to Electronic Driving Games

by Bill Kunkel
and Joyce Worley

If we can draw conclusions about human desires based on the games we play, there are an awful lot of people out there who yearn to pilot a combat jet, quarterback a football team and/or lead a party of adventurers in search of a kidnapped princess. But if overwhelming numbers mean anything, the experience gamers crave most is...driving a car.

We're not just talking your average drive across town here. Driving games use souped-up cars, put them in races and get games with more potential appeal than any other type of electronic-entertainment product.

The first mechanical driving games started turning up in arcades in the '50s. Most of these simulations used a toy car fused to a perpendicular metal bar capable of swinging left or right. This bar, in turn, was connected to a steering wheel so that turning the wheel to the right caused the toy car to move to the right. The car, pointing straight up, was superimposed over a long roll of paper on which was drawn a top-down view of the road. Once the machine was engaged, the paper started rolling, creating the illusion that the car was moving forward.

The earliest electronic driving game was Atari's *Night Driver*, a devilishly clever, minimalist masterpiece that used the idea of darkness to cover its lack of graphics. The player saw only the luminous marking posts located several feet apart on both sides of the road as he guided his vehicle along a twisting nightmare of a highway. But it was enough, when combined with human imagination, to create a stunning illusion.

Night Driver was originally a coin-op, but it also proved popular in its VCS incarnation. Until recently, most successful driving games came from the coin-ops. Games like *Pole Position* (Atari) and *Turbo Out Run* (Sega) were

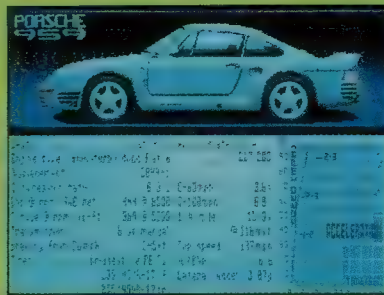
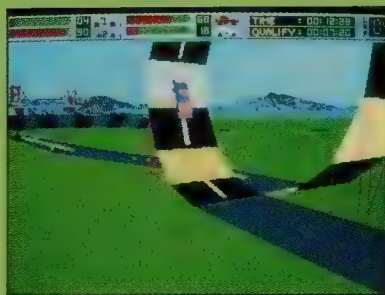
major hits in the arcades and on home-computer and video-game systems.

In the early days of electronic gaming, what was known as the "pseudo-first person" perspective evolved as the dominant viewpoint for driving contests. This display offers most of the virtues of true first-person action while providing gamers with an on-screen vehicle to

spent all their programming muscle on producing realistic landscapes to drive through. *Test Drive* invested its available memory to produce sophisticated simulations of various yuppie dream machines.

The game's other great innovation was the first successful use of *true* first-person perspective. Finally, the user was

brought *inside* the car, where he could see the dashboard as well as his gloved hands gripping the wheel or popping the stick shift. *Test Drive* was a huge commercial success, spawning



Top left: Spectrum's *Speed Driver*. Top right and middle left: Accolade's *Test Drive II: The Road*. Middle right: Origin's *Auto Quest*. Bottom left: Activision's *Grand Prix II*. Bottom right: Sega's *Microcross*.



numerous sequels and extra disks. It also represented the home industry taking the scepter from the coin-op world. For the first time, a non-coin-op driving game was leading the pack.

Recently the tide turned back to the arcade world as Atari's *Hard Drivin'* set new standards in graphic realism. No matter where they come from, driving games have been the most enduringly popular genre of computer entertainment for almost a decade.

The Great Race

It's only natural that the most popular format for automobile driving games is the race. Whether racing against the clock or against other vehicles, there's nothing like the roar of engines and the sight of a checkered flag to stir the blood!

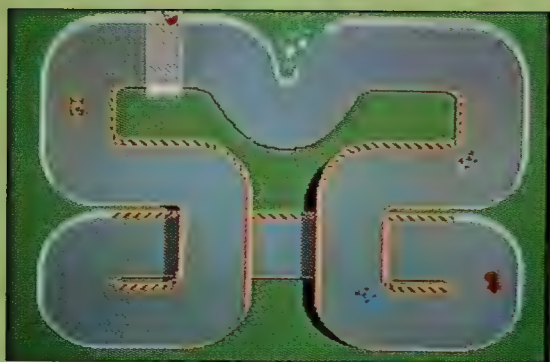
Racing against the clock is the oldest format for auto games. Games from *Night Driver* to *Test Drive III: The Passion* (Accolade) have primarily concerned themselves with simulating the driving experience. But the more

serve as a visual focal point. The top-down point of view has also been used extensively, as in Midway's classic *Rally-X*, Data East's *Bump 'n' Jump* and Mattel's *USAC Auto Racing* for the Intellivision.

Distinctive

Software's ground-breaking *Test Drive* (Accolade) set new standards in driving simulations, both in concept and implementation. Although there had been countless driving simulations before it, *Test Drive* was the first to cash in on sports car chic. Whereas earlier games



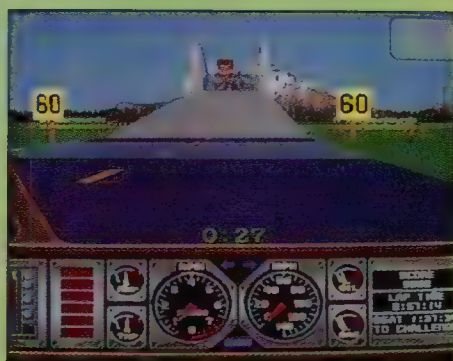


Left: Atari's *Super Sprint*. Right: Dynamix's *David Wolf: Secret Agent*. Middle: Atari's *Hard Drivin'*. Bottom left: Mindscape's *Harley-Davidson: The Road to Sturgis*. Bottom right: *Mean Streets* by Access.

official racing context, with its checkered flags and pit stops, has dominated the scene in recent years. *Test Drive II: The Duel* (Accolade), in fact, broke with the original by presenting the test drive as a head-to-head race between a Ferrari F40 and a Porsche 959. The sequel proved enormously popular, spawning two scenery disks, *California Challenge* and *European Challenge*, and two car disks, *The Supercars* and *The Muscle Cars*. The *Supercars* disk gave users access to an '88 Lotus Turbo Esprit, Ferrari Testarossa, Porsche 911 RUF, '88 Lamborghini Countach 5000S and an '89 Corvette ZR1. The *Muscle Cars* added a '63 Corvette Stingray, a '69 Dodge Charger Daytona, a '68 Shelby GT500 Cobra, '67 Pontiac GTO and a '69 COPO 9560 ZL-1 Camaro.

Test Drive III: The Passion (Accolade) is the first *TD* game not created by Don Mattrick's Distinctive Software. That development house broke with Accolade

after failing to agree on a new contract, and the pressure was on designer Tom Loughry's team to meet the exalted expectations of the *TD* audience. Loughry, who had earlier impressed gamers with *Gunboat* and *Steel Thunder* (both from Accolade), surpassed all expectations with the third entry in the *Test Drive* series.



The Passion set all sorts of new standards in terms of graphic excellence and simulation-quality realism. Combining polygon and bit-mapped graphics, Loughry's team fashioned a rich, full world of highways passing forests, mountains, beaches and railroad crossings. Day turns to night, it rains and snows—better turn on those windshield wipers!—and, best of all, the driver has unparalleled freedom of movement. Go in reverse, make a 180-degree turn and drive in the opposite direction or leave the road altogether.

The cars in this game are literal dream



MOTORCYCLES AND MOTORCYCLING
MOTORCYCLES, WHILE NOT AS POPULAR AS AUTOMOBILES, HAVE ALSO BEEN A POPULAR SUBJECT FOR SIMULATION. HERE'S A RUNDOWN ON SOME OF THE BEST:

COMPUTER GAMES

THE CYCLES: INTERNATIONAL GRAND PRIX RACING (ACCOLADE FOR IBM PC AND MACINTOSH)—*TEST DRIVE* CREATORS TAKE ON MOTORCYCLING AS THREE BIKE CLASSES (125CC, 250CC AND 500CC) RACE ON ANY OF 15 HIGH-SPEED TRACKS. *THE CYCLES* EMPLOYS A TRUE, OVER-THE-HANDLEBARS, FIRST-PERSON PERSPECTIVE AND EXCELLENT GRAPHICS.

CYCLEKNIGHT (ARTWORX FOR C-64)—LESS THAN STATE-OF-THE-ART GRAPHICS DECORATE THIS ACTION-STRATEGY FUTURE FANTASY, BUT IT KEEPS A SOLID GAMING FOUNDATION. THE PLAYER RIDES A HIGH-TECH SUPER-CYCLE INTO A FUTURISTIC WORLD OF MAGIC AND SCIENCE GONE MAD.

HARLEY-DAVIDSON: THE ROAD TO STURGIS (MINDSCAPE)—THE MOST STORIED RUN IN MOTORCYCLE HISTORY, THE ANNUAL ODYSSEY TO STURGIS, IS THE SUBJECT OF THIS PURIST'S CHOICE SIMULATION. THE GAME USES A PSEUDO-FIRST-PERSON PERSPECTIVE TO GIVE MAXIMUM IMPACT TO THE CLIMBS, DRAGS AND POKER RUNS. INSTRUMENTATION IS DISPLAYED AT THE BOTTOM OF THE SCREEN. GAMERS CAN CUSTOMIZE THEIR HOGS TO THEIR TASTE.

MOTOCROSS (GAMESTAR FOR C-64 AND IBM PC)—THE 250CC MOTOCROSS RACING CIRCUIT IS THE FOCUS OF THIS ENTERTAINING SIMULATION WITH AN EMPHASIS ON JUMPS (AND LANDING AFTER THEM). TEN TRACKS ARE INCLUDED.

SUPERBIKE CHALLENGE (BRØDERBUND FOR ATARI ST, C-64 AND IBM PC)—RACE A 1000CC (READ: POWERFUL!) CHOPPER ON ANY OF A DOZEN GRAND PRIX COURSES. *SUPERBIKE CHALLENGE* USES A PSEUDO-FIRST-PERSON PERSPECTIVE AND A VERTICALLY SPLIT SCREEN. AN ON-SCREEN SPEEDOMETER, RPM, LAP COUNTER AND MORE ADD TO THE REALISM.

SUPER HANG-ON (DATA EAST FOR ATARI ST, C-64, IBM PC AND MACINTOSH)—A CLASSIC COIN-OP COMES TO THE HOME COMPUTER, COMPLETE WITH A COURSE EDITOR AND PSEUDO-FIRST-PERSON PERSPECTIVE FOR UNSOPHISTICATED FUN.

continued on page 92

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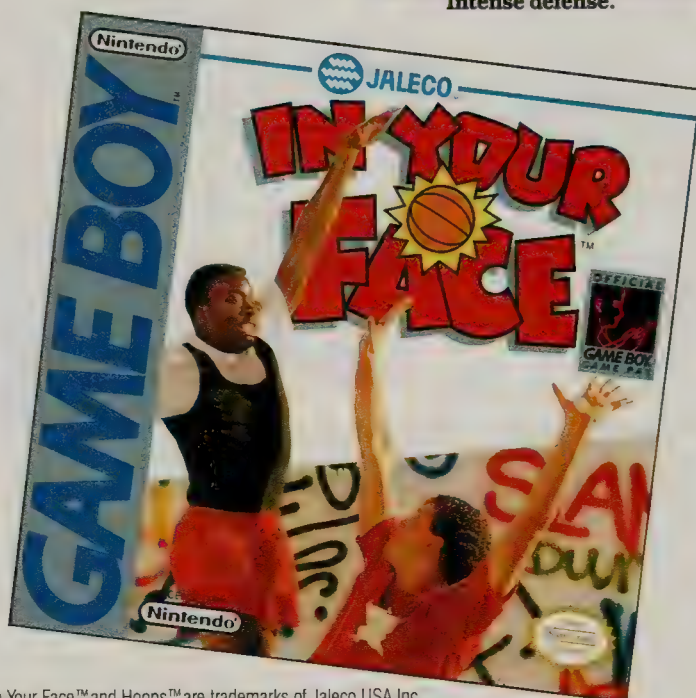
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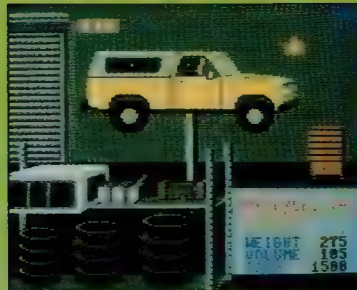
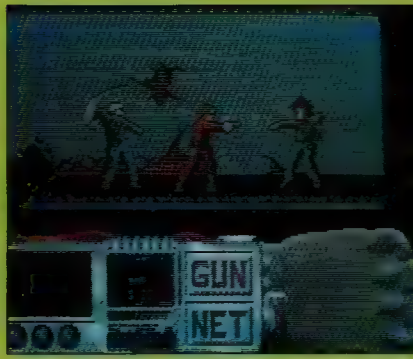
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Top left: Spectrum HoloByte's *'Vette*. Top right: Epyx's *TechnoCop*. Bottom left: 4 x 4 Off Road Racing. Bottom right: Accolade's *The Cycles: International Grand Prix Racing*.

cars—some, in fact, only live on the drawing board, while others exist only in prototype form. The Chevrolet Cerv III, the exotic-sounding Pininfarina Mythos and the red-hot Lamborghini Diablo are the vehicles included in this superb simulation.

Another popular driving program is Spectrum HoloByte's *'Vette*, an IBM PC Corvette simulator with an emphasis on city driving. The gamer takes a Corvette through the streets of San Francisco, past pedestrians, cable cars and all the popular landmarks of the City by the Bay. In the NES world, *'Vette* fanciers can check out *Corvette ZR-1* (Milton Bradley), a head-to-head cross-country race with an on-screen window displaying the opponent's position.

Other computer games of this type include *Crazy Cars* and its sequel, *F40 Pursuit* (Titus), *Pole Position II* (Mindscape), *Out Run*, *Hot Rod* and its sequel, *Street Rod* (California Dreams). In *Street Rod* players start out with the money to

buy and customize a street racing vehicle, like a '55 Dodge Custom Royal Lancer, stick in a dual, four-barrel manifold and a pair of four-barrel racing carbs, then burn rubber at either the local drive-in or drag on the highways for big money. Video-game fans can check out *Rad Racer II* (Square Soft) on the

NES, a conventional into-the-screen driving game with some nice accompanying music and a selection of backgrounds.

The Checkered Flag

For drivers who prefer more traditional racing, there are no shortage of race-track, road-rally and Grand Prix contests. *Lombard Rally* (Mandarin), an example of the road-rally type game, places the gamer behind the wheel of a Ford Sierra RS Cosworth driving over some auto-busting terrain in this British re-creation of the famous title rally.

Another rally-based game is *Turbo Out Run* (Sega), a revamp of the original *Out Run*, in which the player drives a Porsche

Left: Data East's *Super Hang-On*. Middle: Accolade's *California Challenge*. Right: Accolade's *European Challenge*.



959 on a cross-country road rally.

Talladega (Cosmi), *Ferrari Formula One* (Electronic Arts) and *Grand Prix Circuit* (Accolade), from Distinctive Software, are all simulations of big-time racing that have been available on computers for over a year. The new kid on the block is *Indianapolis 500*

continued from page 90

VIDEO GAMES

RALLY BIKE (ROMSTAR FOR NES)—A TWO-PLAYER (ALTERNATING TURNS) CROSS-COUNTRY BIKE RACE FROM SAN FRANCISCO TO NEW YORK CITY IN SIX STAGES. THE TOP TEN RACERS CAN UPGRADE THEIR VEHICLES AT THE TUNE-UP SHOP. *RALLY BIKE* USES A VERTICALLY SCROLLING TOP-DOWN PERSPECTIVE. THE GRAPHICS ARE NOTHING SPECIAL.

SEICROSS (FCI FOR NES)—FUTURISTIC HOVER-BIKE GAME IN WHICH A CONQUERED PEOPLE ATTEMPTS TO FREE ITS CAPTIVES THROUGH THE USE OF SOPHISTICATED SUPER-CYCLES. ONE- OR TWO-PLAYER ACTION BOASTS THREE ROTATING SCREEN PATTERNS AND AUTOMATIC SPEED CONTROL. THE GAME USES AN UNUSUAL, ANGLED SIDE PERSPECTIVE.

SUPER HANG-ON (SEGA FOR GENESIS)—PHENOMENAL GRAPHICS AND GAME SPEED MAKE THIS LONGTIME MOTORCYCLE CLASSIC A REAL TRIP ON THE SEGA GENESIS!

COIN-OP

WGP (TAITO)—EXTREMELY HOT GRAPHICS ELEVATE THIS OVER-THE-HANDLEBARS, FIRST-PERSON PERSPECTIVE MOTORCYCLE-RACING GAME ABOVE THE PACK.

—B. K. & J. W.

(Electronic Arts), by the Papyrus Design Group, a state-of-the-art track-racing simulation complete with multiple camera angles and replays of crashes.

Video-game race fans also have a wide variety of games to choose from. NES track fans can check out *AI Unser Jr. Turbo Racing* (Data East), which provides a choice of 20 international race tracks and on-screen hints from Unser.

Formula One racing gets the NES treatment in *Built to Win: F-1 B.T.W.* (Seta), in which gamers get to compete against 32 of the top drivers.

Even hand-held fans can get into the act with *Checkered Flag* (Atari), a Formula One racing game for the Atari Lynx, and *Days of Thunder* (Mindscape), based on the Tom Cruise movie, for the Game Boy. NES stock-car fans can enjoy *Bill Elliott's NASCAR Challenge*, the first NASCAR-endorsed stock car video game.

Introducing Total Reality

This 256-color, true-to-life golf simulator gives you unprecedented 3D graphics...so realistic—so *advanced*—you'll think you're on the course.

It's a beautiful Spring morning as you prepare to tee off. You select your #1 driver (ignoring your caddy's wisecrack)...take a practice swing... adjust your stance...and drive one *right down the middle* for 290 yards. As you approach your second shot, you notice *every* detail of your surroundings... the location of each tree...the contour of each hill and slope...the lay of the ball...

A day on your favorite course? Not quite, but it's the next best thing. *LINKS...The Challenge of Golf* is a totally realistic golf simulator that's a quantum leap ahead of any computer golf game you've ever seen.

You'll control your game to the degree you prefer...from defaulting to the standard swings...to adjusting your stance, backswing, acceleration, power and snap. With every drive and putt, your ball will act according to the *true* laws of physics.

And you'll experience all the sounds of a real tournament...from commentary...to caddy's remarks...to the swoosh of the swing...click of the drive ...and bloop of the ball in the water.

LINKS also includes a practice area for driving, chipping and putting.

3D Terrain

LINKS is brought to you by Access Software... the same fanatics for accuracy and realism who gave you World Class Leader Board Golf—and the graphics are *unbelievably realistic*. Gone are square-edged screens that look like Lego blocks. With *LINKS*, hills actually look like hills, trees look like trees, water looks like water. (And, yes, golfers even look like golfers.) In fact, *LINKS* uses graphics technology so advanced that a VGA system is absolutely required for play.

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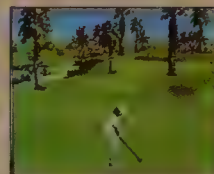
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(all orders must be signed)

The Grand Prix remains one of the most popular racing formats, led by DSI's *Grand Prix Circuit* (Accolade) on the computer; Sega's spectacular *Super Monaco GP* on the Genesis; American Sammy's *Michael Andretti's World GP* on the NES; and *Final Lap Twin*, by NEC, on the TurboGrafx-16. *Grand Prix Circuit* allows gamers to compete against a selection of world-class drivers on the famous courses of several continents. *Super Monaco GP* offers a cavalcade of eye-popping landscapes that push the Genesis to new limits. *Michael Andretti's World GP* offers 13 pros to race against on 16 famous raceways in any of four vehicles. *Final Lap Twin* allows the player to select either a V8 or V10 Grand Prix-style racer and compete head to head using a split-screen display on any of over a dozen tracks.

Power Drift (Activision) is a somewhat more offbeat track-racing game for computers. The competition includes such characters as Jason the Skinhead and Jeronimo the Mohican, and the 25 available tracks include a preponderance of urban landscapes.

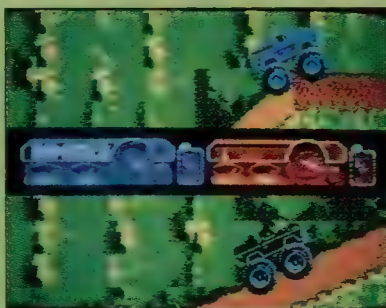
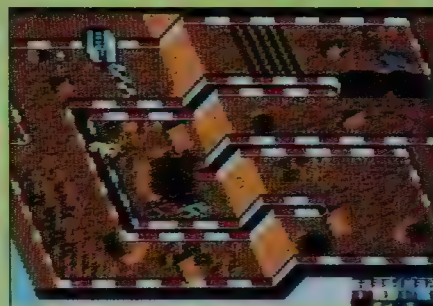
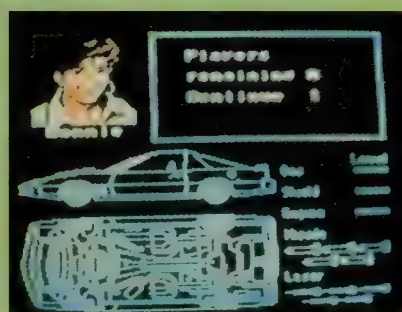
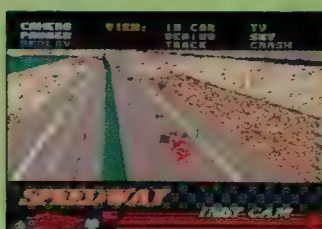
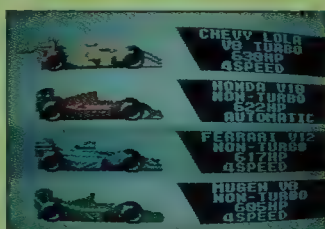
Supercarist

Another genre of driving games undergoing a surge of popularity right now is the supercar games: contests where the player's vehicle has either been greatly modified or can perform incredible stunts.

The rage for stunt driving stems from the success of Atari's *Hard Drivin'* coin-op, an incredible technological achievement that offers arcaders the most realistic auto simulator ever produced for the entertainment market. At the start of a play session, players are offered alternate paths. One is a

traditional race track, while the other is something from an Evel Knievel

Top left: *Michael Andretti's World GP* by American Sammy. Top center: Electronic Arts' *Grand Prix Circuit*. Top right: NEC's *Final Lap Twin*. Middle left: Sega's *Super Monaco GP*. Middle right: *Super Off Road*. Screen left: *Sammy's Bigfoot*. Bottom right: *Bigfoot*.



nightmare, complete with open drawbridge and loop-the-loops! A sequel, *Race Drivin'*, promises more state-of-the-art thrills with an emphasis on the more outrageous elements of navigating a car.

Hard Drivin' is now on its way to most computer and video-game systems courtesy of Tengen, but gamers have

several alternatives in this category. One is *Stunt Driver*, from Spectrum HoloByte, in which users take a '66 Shelby Mustang on a wild ride through corkscrew turns, loop-the-loops and ramp jumps—all while avoiding other, hostile vehicles. The game includes five pre-designed courses and a roll-your-own feature, as well as a head-to-head modem-play option.

The other alternative is *Stunts*, the anxiously anticipated first release from Don

Mattrick and DSI after moving under Brøderbund's umbrella. Race driver Ross Bentley, of Vancouver's Indy CART, consulted with Distinctive to help with the authenticity of this stunt driving simulation. Loop-the-loops, jumps, corkscrews, slaloms and even tubular drive-through pipes for upside-down driving are featured, as is a track-editor

option to allow gamers to build their own courses. *Stunts* offers gamers 11 different cars, including the Lamborghini Countach and the Acura NSX, and a variety of AI-driven competitors including

Herr Otto Partz and the infamous Helen Wheels.

Another type of stunt driving is explored in Acclaim's *Bigfoot*, a monster-truck simulation. (Monster trucks, as everyone who hasn't been

on Mars for the last decade or so knows, are pickup trucks modified with gigantic engines and even bigger tires.) This head-to-head or human-vs.-NES contest involves a race across the U.S.A. seen in vertically scrolling top-down perspective.

The idea of autos as weapons has been explored in several games, including *Road Blasters*, an Atari coin-op that has turned up on the NES

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(Mindscape) and the Lynx (Atari). The original arcade game sent a driver in an armed auto through 50 rounds of crosswalk combat with photon bombs, electro shields and nitro injectors collected along the way.

Computer owners can sample more sophisticated versions of this same concept in *Auto Duel* (Origin) and *Deathtrack* (Activision). Both games use the concept of drivers running on a circuit, building more powerful and better-protected vehicles with their winnings, but the much older *Auto Duel* is hurt by its crude, top-down perspective, while Dynamix's superb *Deathtrack* employs the more popular first-person view and makes use of top-notch animation technology for IBM PC computers.

A new game from Atari for its 2600 and 7800 game systems, *Fatal Run*, is a gauntlet-running science-fiction contest in which users must drive an armored, weapon-equipped auto to deliver a lifesaving vaccine.

Even fans of *nonaction* games can also get a share of the killer-car experience with SSI's science-fiction strategy games, *Roadwar 2000* and the sequel, *Roadwar Europa*, in which gamers move over a postwar landscape, building an army of armored autos.

No discussion of supercars would be complete, however, without a mention of KITT, America's favorite mega-mobile, from the TV show *Knight Rider*—especially since KITT is now available to NES owners in Acclaim's *Knight Rider* video game. This extremely challenging game comprises 15 missions, each in a different city. All of KITT's special equipment is needed in this challenging game just to keep the player-character alive.

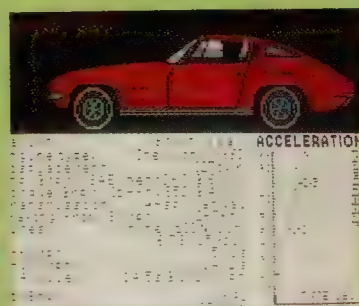
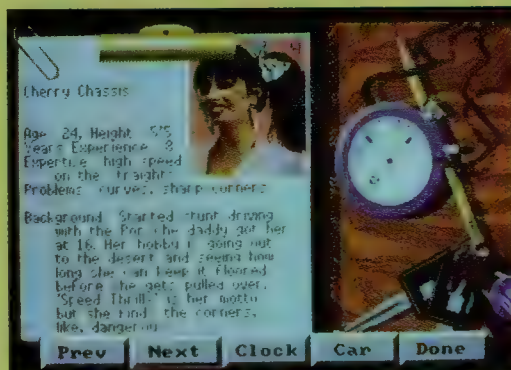
Off-Roading

If there's anything gamers yearn for more than the freedom of the road, it's the freedom to get the heck *off* the road. In fact, off-road racing games have boomed in recent years with titles like 4

x 4 *Off Road Racing* (Epyx) and *Off Road* (Virgin Mastertronic) for computers and *Super Off-Road* (Tradewest) for NES video gamers.

Actually, *Super Off-Road* and *Off Road* are actually versions of the same game, Leland's excellent *Off Road* coin-

Top: Brøderbund's *Stunts*. Second row, left: California Dreams' *Street Rod*. Second row, right: Data East's *AI Unser Jr. Turbo Racing*. Third row, left: Electronic Arts' *Ferrari Formula One*. Third row, right: Accolade's *The Muscle Cars*. Bottom: Accolade's *Grand Prix Circuit*.



op. This game is notable as one of the few exterior-view driving games to succeed in the contemporary market. It

uses a perspective similar to that seen in the classic NES game *R-C Pro-Am* (scheduled to arrive on the Genesis sometime this year as well), but without the scrolling. *Off Road* and *Super Sprint*, an Atari coin-op, both used an angled overhead view of a single-screen track to produce a totally unique racing contest.

The Driving Mini-Game

An increasingly popular category of driving game is the driving module, in which driving is just one of many game elements comprising a larger experience. *TechnoCop* (Epyx) and *Road Raider* (Mindscape), both developed for computer by Chris Gray's Gray Matter development group, intercut between driving sequences and on-foot action.

In *TechnoCop*, the player alternates between first-person driving sequences and horizontally scrolling side view action, while in the more sophisticated *Road Raider*, driving is portrayed in top-down perspective while the on-foot scenarios are rendered from an angled overhead view.

Domark's *License to Kill* (distributed by Brøderbund), *David Wolf: Secret Agent* (Dynamix), *Operation Thunderbolt* (Taito) and *Mean Streets*

(Access) are computer games that include driving sequences. Numerous NES video games make use of driving scenarios, including Sunsoft's *Spy Hunter*, *Dick Tracy* (Bandai), *Mission: Impossible* (Ultra), *Ghostbusters II* (Activision) and *Back to the Future II & III* (LJN). *TechnoCop* (Razorsoft) and *Bean Ball Benny* (Nuvision) are now on their way to the Sega Genesis. *Gangster Town* (Sega), for the Sega Master System, uses the light gun in a driving pursuit-and-shoot-out scenario.

Things to Come

Driving games show no signs of losing popularity anytime soon. In fact, the future offers us so many exciting possibilities that the genre can only get better! 🏎️

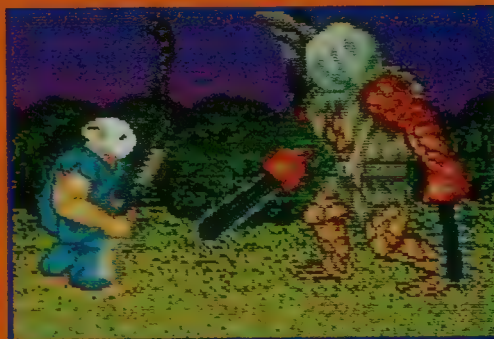
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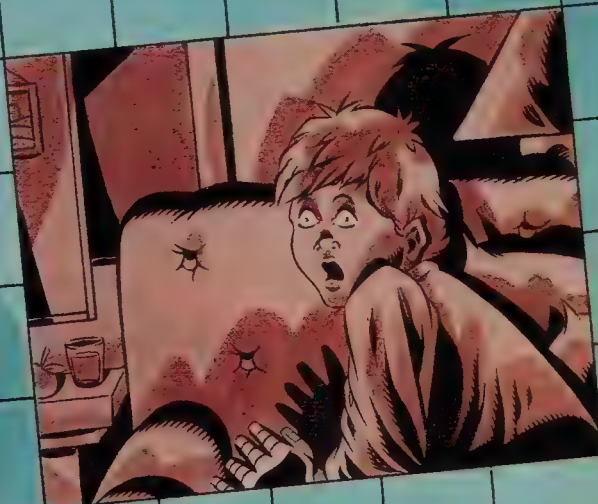
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A Player's Guide to

SUPER GLOVE BALL

Part Two

by Donn Navert



As you were repairing an Allied Space Agency spy satellite, you got caught in a dimensional rip in the space around you. Not having taken a spacesuit or weapons with you, your only chance of survival is to somehow use your jet-powered robo-repair glove to get you out of the seemingly endless maze of rooms. Can you survive?

This is the second part of a strategy guide designed to help you through that endless maze of rooms in Super Glove Ball. This part covers the final area of the game, Area 3. As in the first part (in the February 1991 issue) some pathways have been intentionally deleted to give you the chance to do some exploring for yourself. The essential rooms and path to take to get through the game have been laid out for you.

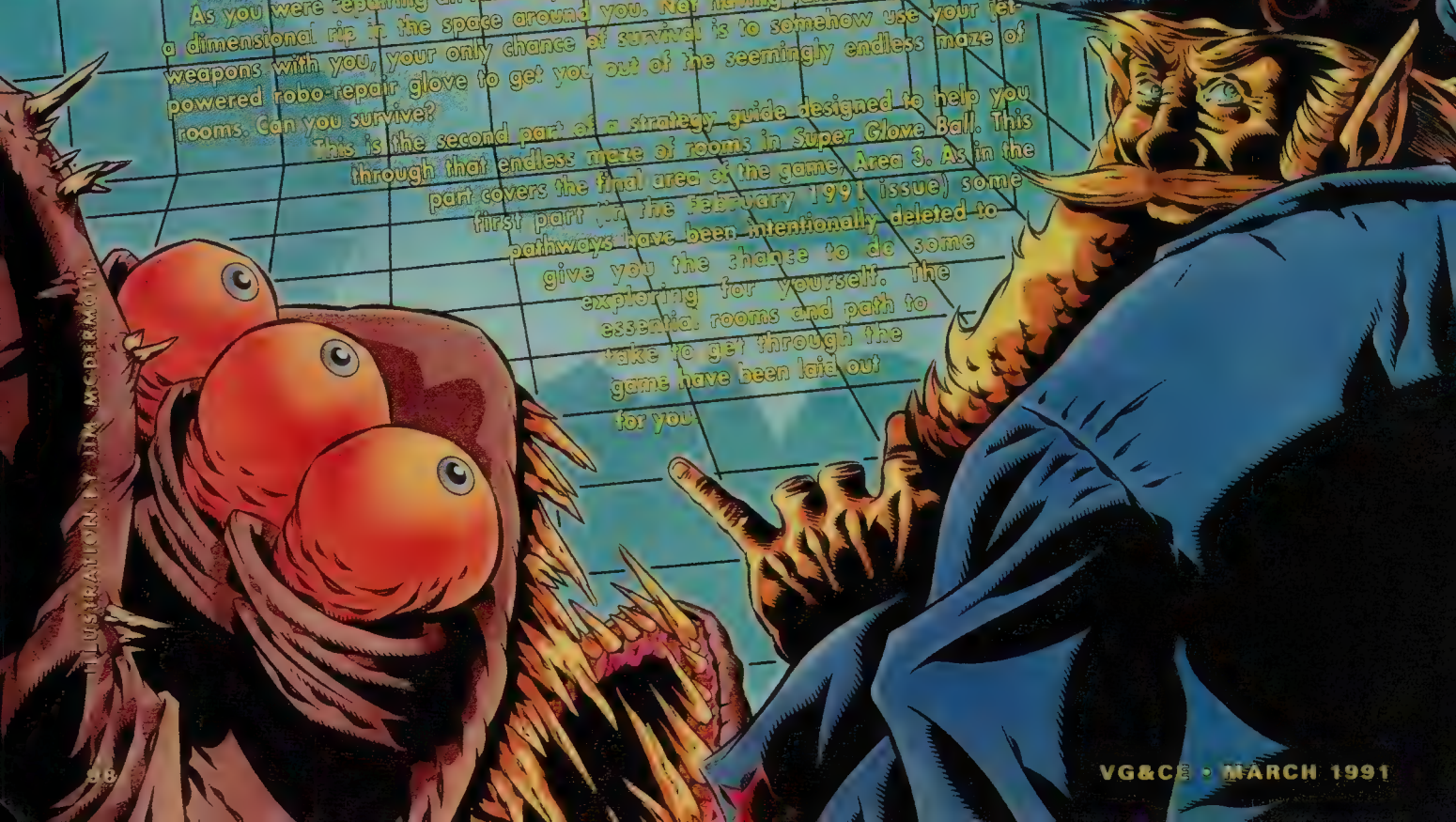


ILLUSTRATION BY TIM MCDERMOTT

Area 3 of Super Glove Ball is by far the longest and most complex area in the game. After completing Area 2, you'll be transported to Room 6. From there you'll need to go up through the ceiling into Room 11. Once you clear the right wall of Room 11, you'll want to enter Room 12. In Room 12, clear the bottom wall or floor and enter Room 7. Once again, clearing the bottom wall or floor will allow you to continue, this time to Room 3. In Room 3 you'll want to clear the right wall so that you can enter Room 2. Room 2 is a puzzle room. By lining up a column of the same symbol, you'll be able to enter the back wall by moving "in" to the wall. This will take you to Room 21 on the next map.

SUPER GLOVE BALL AREA 3

As in the first area, to move up on the map is to actually move up through the ceiling in the various rooms. To move "in" means that you will need to move to the back wall, which is the wall facing you while you're playing. This legend is the same for all three sections of the map.



"W>" means you are warped back to that room number. (W>6 warps you back to Room 6).



SUPER GLOVE BALL AREA 3

Room 21 is the starting room for this section of Area 3. By clearing the bottom or floor of Room 21, you'll get the chance to enter Room 17. In Room 17 you'll want to concentrate on clearing the left wall so that you can enter Room 16. In Rooms 16, 20 and 24, your main concern will be to clear the ceiling so that you can eventually reach Room 29. Once in Room 29, you'll want to take a right (by clearing the right wall) so that you can enter Room 30. Again, go for the right wall in Room 30 to enter Room 31. In Room 31 you'll want to sweep the floor so that you can enter Room 26. Complete the puzzle room, and you'll be off to Room 43 on the next map.

START THIS PHASE IN ROOM 21-GOAL IS ROOM 26

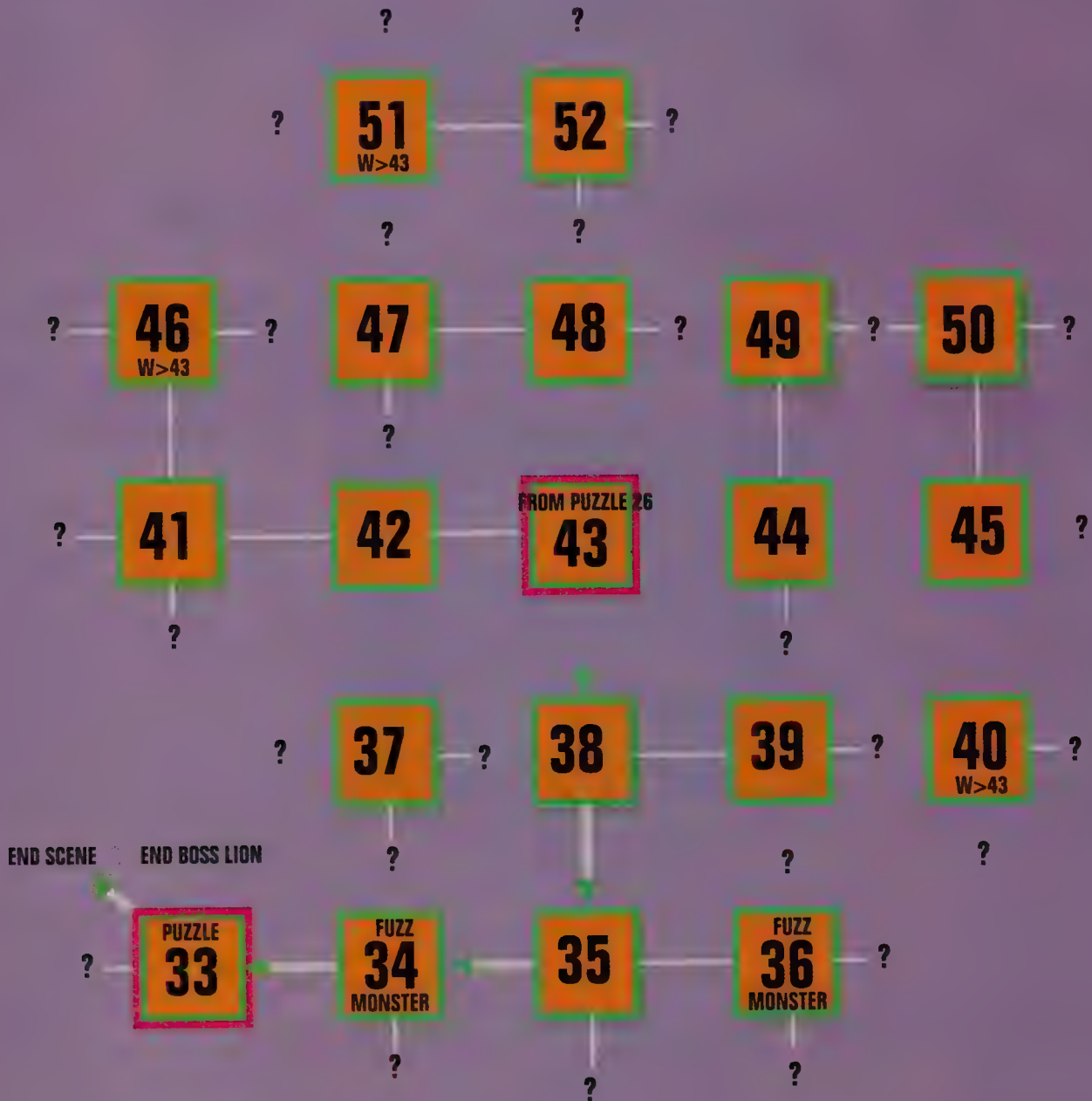


This last section of Area 3 is relatively short—but that doesn't mean it's easy. In Rooms 39 and 35 you'll come across a new enemy that likes to shoot fireballs at you, and in Room 34 you'll also have to deal with a vicious fuzz monster. One touch from him can cause you to lose a life.

From the starting room (Room 43), you need to clear the floor so that you can enter Room 38. Once again clear the floor so that you can now enter Room 35; in Room 35 you'll need to clear the left wall so that you can enter Room 34. The last room, Room 33, can be entered by clearing the left wall of Room 34. After defeating the Lion in Room 33 (which we'll leave up to you), you'll need to make a column of like symbols and move "in" to see the exciting conclusion of this fine game.

SUPER GLOVE BALL AREA 3

START THIS PHASE IN ROOM 21—GOAL IS ROOM 26



LET THERE BE

SOUND!

BY
BILL
KUNKEL

SOUND BOARDS BRING PC GAMES TO LIFE

Sound has always been a vital, if overlooked, component of electronic gaming. In the early '70s, the humble beeps and boops produced by the parade of *Pong*-type contests were almost as crucial to the success of ball-and-paddle games as the balls and paddles. What would *Space Invaders* have been, after all, without the relentless thump-thump-thump of alien pseudopods as they advanced down the screen? And can you even imagine *Pac-Man* without the famous theme music or the legendary "wocka-wocka-wocka" sound effects?

In the ensuing years we've seen the coming of the Amiga, with its vaunted sound and speech-generating capabilities. Video-game systems like the Sega Genesis have arrived complete with stereo sound, while the TurboGrafx-16 has its own CD drive, capable of generating state-of-the-art digital audio.

Sound has been slower in coming to the IBM PC computers, however. But with the continued success of the PC and its massive entry into the entertainment side of the business, sound eventually assumed a priority position. The internal PC speaker, after all, is a pathetic thing, barely fit to generate an occasional, artificial-sounding beep or boop. Within the past 18 months, sound boards have swept through the PC universe like Genghis Khan taking China.

Computerists are no different from the movie fans who fell in love with talkies after

years of devotion to silent films, or the longtime radio fans who suddenly converted to television. We human beings experience life through our senses, and the more senses an object engages, the more fully we can sample



Walt Disney Software has joined the sound-board fray with its newly released Sound Source.

it. Suddenly, PC gamers who never thought much about audio before found themselves vaguely unsatisfied with games that offered nothing more than the feeble bleating of the on-board speaker.

Budget Beeps and Boops

Enhanced sound does not come cheaply in the PC universe. Any sound board worth buying is going to cost from just over \$100 to nearly \$600, and that price often does not include the cost of speakers.

Innovation offered a \$69 sound board a couple of years ago—the SS12001—based around the Commodore HMOS 6581 or SID (sound interface generator) chip, but it has generated virtually no support from the software-publishing community.

The Covox Sound Master lists for under \$120, but also suffers from a paucity of software support. The Sound Master is a half-sized card based around a three-voice sound chip, the AY8930. The Sound Master also includes an 8-bit DMA (Direct Memory Access) digitizer, stereo amplifier, two 2.25" speakers and a pair of *digital* joystick ports. (Unfortunately, digital joysticks are the type of sticks used with Atari and Commodore game and computer systems, but they are virtually nonexistent in the PC universe.)

The Covox system basically reroutes the sounds that were previously emitted from the internal speaker of the PC, amplifies them and sends them on through its speakers. To this extent, the Sound Master supports *all* PC software, but amplified, stereophonic beeps and boops are probably not what most users have in mind when they think about enhancing the audio capabilities of their computers. A small percentage of PC software is specially programmed to exploit the Sound Master, however, and Maxis' *SimCity* provides a good example of what this system could do if it had more widespread support.



YOU'LL FLIP OVER IT!

All across the cosmos, top gamers like yourself have been flippin' out over MetalStorm's "Gravity Flip" feature. Together with such never-before-seen game features as dual scrolling and "breathing" enemies, "Gravity Flip" will leave you wondering just which way is up.

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CIRCLE #142 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

The Ad Lib Story

The most popular of the existing sound boards is the Ad Lib, a low-to-medium priced card (under \$150) with an 11-voice FM synthesizer. A "voice" refers to the number of instruments or sound effects the system can produce; of the Ad Lib's 11 voices, six are melodic and five are percussive. Sounds are generated using a clever mix of FM synthesis and white-noise generation. The Ad Lib card is not a stereo system, but its audio output jack, located on the back, easily hooks up to a pair of car-type speakers. A volume knob is also located on the back of the card for easy access.

The basic package includes *Ad Lib Juke Box*, a playback program containing 16 songs, and interfaces with an entire line of related products such as *Visual Composer*, a music composition program; *Instrument Maker*, and several music-playback products.

The Ad Lib card produces sound of superior quality to the internal speaker of the PC, but its strength is the incredible support it has among software publishers. Virtually every major publisher, from Access to Walt Disney, supports the Ad Lib card, which has become the current industry standard.

Blast Off!

Creative Labs has been turning out sound cards for PCs for several years now. First, there was the Game Blaster, a 12-voice adapter card capable of producing sounds from a preset library of 32 instruments. The Game Blaster was originally part of Creative Labs' *CMS* (Creative Music System) package, which included the sound card and a five-disk software system called the *Intelligent Organ*.

The Game Blaster drew immediate approval from the software sector, attracting support from companies like Cinemaware, Lucasfilm, Origin and Sierra. Sierra, in fact, actually packed Game Blaster cards with some copies of *Silpheed* as part of a special co-promotion during the 1989 Christmas season. Spurred on by this success, Creative Labs turned its attentions toward the production of an even more impressive sound board, initially designated the Killer Kard.

The Killer Kard was eventually released as the Sound Blaster, but it was a Killer nonetheless. The Sound Blaster is actually an Ad Lib card *plus*, containing not only an Ad Lib-compatible 11-voice FM music synthesizer but also extensive speech synthesis and editing capabilities, a built-in MIDI interface, analog joystick port (the right kind for PC sticks) and a four-watts-per-channel amplifier. The Ad Lib compatibility gives Sound Blaster owners access to a ton of software, though a smaller number of companies provide true Sound Blaster support, taking advantage of the card's additional capabilities.

The Sound Blaster has a DAC, a digitized voice channel containing real-world sound samples. Recording or sampling is a straightforward process; the user plugs in the audio signal—a microphone or some prerecorded music source—then views and manipulates the data via the *Voice Kit* software. Music can be saved to disk and replayed on command. Creative Labs' proprietary voice compression software and decompression hardware minimizes storage space. A special

DMA chip allows the PC to run music, speech or sound effects without putting a drag on the other processing functions.

The analog joystick port was an inspired idea. Since the number of card slots any PC can run is obviously limited, this type of add-on will be welcomed by the vast majority of users. The MIDI interface is less cut-and-dried. First, a special MIDI box must be purchased from Creative Labs that

plugs into the Sound Blaster's joystick port (the MIDI box has a joystick port of its own). Second, it is not compatible with any other MIDI format, including Roland's. This is a major limitation; obviously, once the user begins dealing with Sound Blaster MIDI, he or she is going to be stuck there.

All these extra goodies cost money. The Sound Blaster retails for \$239, and the MIDI Box is another \$49.95. On the other hand, a Sound Blaster purchaser is getting an Ad Lib card, a Game Blaster card, a DAC, a joystick port and a MIDI interface. All in all, that's a pretty good deal.



Many developers support Ad Lib's board, the most popular to date.

VG&CE RATES SOUND BOARDS FOR INSTALLATION EASE

Ratings are as follows: easy (no problem to install); moderate (means things could be difficult, under certain conditions); and hard (the user is likely to have some difficulty). The best game refers to the game that takes best advantage of that particular board.

THE SOUND MASTER

This can be difficult to install if your existing PC speaker wire isn't easily traceable back to the motherboard, since a wire attached to the Covox board must be plugged into the internal speaker connector of the PC. This enables the primitive sounds to be rerouted through the amplifier and speakers of the system. The board itself is easy to insert.

Best Game: *SimCity* (Maxis)
Rating: Moderate
Covox, Inc.
675 Conger St.
Eugene, OR 97402
(503) 342-1271

THE AD LIB MUSIC SYNTHESIZER

The rest of the PC universe should be this easy to deal with! Just remove the PC's casing and snap in the Ad Lib card.

Best Games: *WolfPack* (Brøderbund),
Loom (Lucasfilm), *Conquests of Camelot* (Sierra)
Rating: Easy
Ad Lib, Inc.
50 Stanford St., Suite 800
Boston, MA 02114
(800) 463-2686

THE SOUND BLASTER

You never quite know how the installation will go with the Sound Blaster. It'll go smooth as silk so long as the default settings work with your PC. It is not uncommon, however, to have to install additional sound drivers. If the I/O address or interrupt-request line jumpers have to be changed, the installation time can be easily doubled.

Best Games: *Wing Commander* (Origin),
Prince of Persia (Brøderbund); *Space Quest III* (Sierra)
Rating: Hard
Creative Labs, Inc.
131 South Maple Ave., #6
South San Francisco, CA 94080
(415) 742-6109

THE SOUND SOURCE

This is unquestionably the easiest-to-install sound system of the bunch. The Sound Source is a self-contained unit, including speaker and volume control, that runs off a single nine-volt battery. The unit plugs directly into the PC's parallel printer port; the printer, in turn, can be plugged directly into the back of the Sound Source's plug, so printer capability is maintained.

Best Games: *Mickey's Colors & Shapes* (Disney), *Mickey's ABC's* (Disney)
Rating: Easy
Disney Software

continued on page 106

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CIRCLE #143 ON READER SERVICE CARD

Roland Rules!

The one thing about PC sound systems that everyone agrees on is which company makes the best product. That company is Roland, a longtime leader in the sound-simulation business. Roland's original entry into the PC sound sweepstakes was the fabled MT-32, featuring eight individual synthesizers, percussion sound module, 128 preset sounds and MIDI compatibility.

Today, Roland's LAPC-1 is the system of choice for discriminating (not to mention financially secure) PC gamers. The LAPC-1 brings the same digital quality sounds to the PC as the MT-32, but instead of the MT-32's bulky three-piece set-up (card, case and power supply), the LAPC-1 consists of a single, easy-to-install full-sized card. The back of the card features a pair of audio-output jacks, a (fully compatible) MIDI interface connector and a headphone jack. The LAPC-1 lists for \$595, the same price as the MT-32.

As good as the sound produced by cards like the Ad Lib and Sound Blaster are, the Roland systems blow them away. The CD-quality sound capabilities of the Roland boards have not been exploited by as many publishers as support the Ad Lib or Sound Blaster, but most of the top titles use Roland. Sierra has been an especially strong supporter of the Roland systems for several years now, creating lavish, movie-type soundtracks for its adventures that must be heard to be believed.

The Trouble With Sound Boards

Most of the complaints one hears on the subject of sound boards would be more properly laid at the feet of software publishers, rather than the sound-card makers themselves. The most commonly mentioned gripe concerns the tendency of publishers to port over soundtracks rather than individually develop audio to take advantage of each card's strengths and downplay weaknesses.

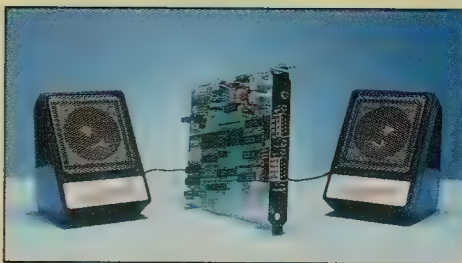
Seth Mendelsohn of Virgin Mastertronic speaks for PC gamers everywhere when he says, "If you're writing a game for a specific sound board—and we're guilty of this, too—you should write the game for that board and not just port it over." There's nothing worse than thinking you're getting Ad Lib sound, for example, when what you're actually getting is IBM sound through an Ad Lib.

The same thing is true of the Sound Blaster, which can do a lot more than the Ad Lib because it has more voices and speech capabilities. But so many of the games that claim to "support" the Sound Blaster are

actually just running Ad Lib sounds through the Sound Blaster.

Publishers have also demonstrated an alarming tendency to become over-dependent on presets—sounds already programmed into the cards. Sure, the Roland has lots of presets (128 of them), but it can do a lot more than that if the developer is willing to take a little time to modify them.

Then, of course, there are the PC publishers that don't support all the major sound cards—not to mention those that support no cards at all. The marketplace is quickly solving the latter problem, of course, by failing to support publishers that don't support sound boards. Ad Lib support has evolved into a sort of minimum industry standard, and by Christmas '91, it's hard to imagine that any major release will not offer some sound-card compatibility.



The Covox Sound Master is a sound board for those on a budget.

Sounds to Come

The newest player in the PC sound sweepstakes is none other than Walt Disney's Computer Software division offering The Sound Source, a battery-operated speaker-amplifier that uses technology created by computer-sound veterans Electronic Speech Systems of Hayward, California.

The Sound Source plugs directly into the PC's parallel printer port (the printer, in turn, plugs into the rear of that plug) and runs off a single nine-volt battery. The unit is a sleek-looking, angular gray case with a single phone-type input and a volume knob. The sound quality is mixed and occasionally muddy, but with only three games currently available that make use of this technology, it's too early to make any judgements.

Obviously, the primary drawback of this system is the almost complete lack of software support. At press time, Disney had released only three Sound Source-compatible programs, all educational software aimed at preschoolers. Unlike the Covox Sound Master, The Sound Source does not even amplify sound from the PC's internal speaker.

The Sound Source retails for a suggested

continued from page 104

500 S. Buena Vista St.
Burbank, CA 91521
(818) 560-5360

LAPC-1, MT-32 SOUND MODULE

The LAPC-1 is the newer, more compact, version of the classic MT-32. The older unit featured the card, case and power supply as separate units. The LAPC-1 comprises a single, full-size card that plugs easily into any PC slot.

Best Games: any Sierra adventure, especially *Space Quest III*

Rating: Easy

Roland Corp.

7200 Dominion Circle
Los Angeles, CA 90040
(213) 685-5141

\$34.95 retail price, and a special \$6.95 adapter is required for Tandy computers. Users must send away for the Tandy Adapter after purchasing The Sound Source.

Another PC sound system that has drawn intense interest and speculation is M-Sound, which comes from a Canadian manufacturer. M-Sound aroused quite a bit of interest among software publishers because the system promised on-board RAM, which would relieve the PC of the strain of having to handle a sound card in addition to the game itself. Penetrating the cloud of secrecy around this project, however, proved a daunting challenge. As of press time, we could not obtain a response from M-Sound, and when asked about the system, more than one software spokesperson muttered the terrifying word: "Vaporware." Whether M-Sound will turn out to be substance or smoke remains to be seen.

The industry is also alive with rumors of new cards from existing sources. Several publishers noted that Ad Lib has a new "gold" card on the way with greatly enhanced sound simulation capabilities at a similarly enhanced price. It is also speculated that Roland may upset everyone else's applecart by offering a near-LAPC-1 quality card in the same under-\$300 price range as Ad Lib's new card. Even IBM may be joining the sound-card revolution with a board for its PS/1 system.

And what about CD? If CD drives become commonplace on PCs over the next few years, won't they prevent the need for expensive sound boards? Probably not, as it remains difficult for CD software to use their audio capabilities to produce much more than elaborate background music that does not interact with the on-screen action. So, while CD may someday render sound boards obsolete, for the present and foreseeable future, the cards are holding a winning hand. ♀

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| BASIS...OADS | 12.00 | 29.95 | EMPEROR CITY | 10.00 | 27.95 | LEGEND OF THE WIZARD | 5.00 | 15.95 | QUEST OF AVATAR | 5.00 | 15.95 | TAG TEAM WRESTLING | 4.00 | 16.95 | | | | |
| BATMAN | 8.00 | 29.95 | EMPEROR CITY | 10.00 | 27.95 | LEGEND OF THE WIZARD | 5.00 | 15.95 | QUEST OF AVATAR | 5.00 | 15.95 | TAG TEAM WRESTLING | 4.00 | 16.95 | | | | |
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| BATMAN XXVII: THE MOVIE | 8.00 | 29.95 | EMPEROR CITY | 10.00 | 27.95 | LEGEND OF THE WIZARD | 5.00 | 15.95 | QUEST OF AVATAR | | | | | | | | | |

New technology is the lifeblood of home electronic entertainment. The industry press hails each new advance, whether it be big-screen television or hand-held cartridge game consoles like the Game Boy and Lynx. Each breakthrough rises above the horizon, superseding all previous accomplishments.

Business writers adore new technology. It produces lots of upbeat, salable stories. Their enthusiasm is understandable, though it is often out of proportion to the actual new development.

It's also true that writers don't like to slaughter a boldly innovative product, even if they privately don't give it much chance of success. For one thing, bad publicity can become a self-fulfilling prophecy. No journalist wants a manufacturer's blame for its latest flop. Most reporters consider it safer to write a scathing obituary for a failed "great advance" than debunk it beforehand.

The video- and computer-game field is no exception. Interchangeable game cartridges, 16-bit processors, 3.5" high-capacity disk drives, multimegabyte internal memory, VGA graphics and stereo game sound are a few of the developments that have sent game analysts wild with joy at various times during the last decade. (Among the items announced with nearly as much hype that never made a dent include Le Stick, the Odyssey³, the Coleco Adam Computer and U-FORCE.)

Make no mistake about it, quite a few of these ground-breaking developments were worth all the printed hyperbole and more. Each of these giant steps materially improved the quality of electronic gaming. Successive major innovations have made possible today's better-than-ever computer disks and video-game cartridges.

Still, it's possible to over-praise even something of genuine importance. The media's adulation for each newly unveiled piece of technology is the classic story of a romantic courtship. They fall in love



CD: GOOD, NOT PERFECT

by Arnie Katz

Writer, editor, lecturer, and game designer Arnie Katz knows the field from every perspective. Each month, his column takes readers inside the world of video and computer games. This month Arnie revisits CD technology and uncovers some major drawbacks.

with the new development at first sight and rush into print with rhapsodic praise. During

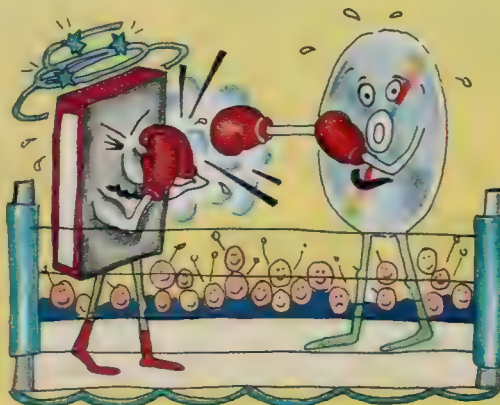
without flaw or failing, makes everything else on the market obsolete and is bound to raise the curtain on a new golden age. It's a tricky trap for the critic/analyst, and there is not one of our group, myself included, who has not gone overboard at least once.

Reality comes within six months to a year. That's when the industry determines the real value of the breakthrough. Critics, some a little embarrassed about the way they gushed over the innovation at first, then pounce on every imperfection and limitation. They tear into the once-beloved new technology like jilted suitors. When the ideal disappoints them, they take revenge on the actuality.

Previous installments of *Inside Gaming* have heralded the approach of the "next big thing," CD-based electronic games. The TurboGrafx-16 already has an optional CD drive, as do IBM PC and Macintosh computers. The FM Towns computer, which may finally come to the U.S. from Japan this winter, also includes a CD-ROM drive.

Commodore has already distributed a few thousand units of its CDTV system, which incorporates a CD drive. Sega and Nintendo both have CD peripherals under development in Japan, Tandy is marketing a CD-equipped computer and Philips is the most visible of several companies working on an interactive CD (CD-I) console for the home. A CD-ROM peripheral may be a little expensive for the average gamer today, but prices are sliding. Within two years, a CD-ROM player could well cost less than \$200.

Some software companies, development houses and design studios have projected all this hardware into a big potential market for entertainment CD software. Outfits like NEC, Sierra, Access, Westwood Associates and ICOM Simulations are all working hard on funware for CD drives, most of which won't be available to the public until sometime in 1992. That's when it's been predicted that CD



this stage, there are no blemishes or imperfections. The new gear is

drives are supposed to take off and become the "home-entertainment phenomenon of the '90s."

As a player, journalist and game designer, I am excited by the potential of compact disc gameware. A single CD dwarfs the storage capacity of any conventional floppy, and the quality of sound and graphics is unbelievable. Realistic speech and complex animation could revolutionize some genres, such as adventures, by making the user interface much more transparent than has been possible with previous technology.

These possibilities have all been realized, I'm pleased to report. That's not the whole story, though. Now that designers and programmers have wrestled with this strange new medium a while, the limitations of existing CD systems have become so painfully obvious that a few of the bolder members of the Fourth Estate (the press) are moving on to the Next Big Thing—CD-I (Compact Disc—Interactive).

Access time is the CD's most frequently mentioned limitation. Most CD systems just don't access graphics rapidly enough to support fast-action games with full-motion video. There'll be plenty of anthologies of conventional computer games on CD, such as the fine collection already introduced by Access Software, but don't expect a lot of first person-perspective digitized video with full animation.

Many CD games will sport movie-quality introductions and "cut scenes," but the graphics will be a good deal simpler once the interactive action gets underway. NEC's adventure for use with the TurboGrafx-CD player, *Y's Books I and II*, looks like a movie—until interactivity begins. It's fairly standard adventuring from that point.

Existing CD drives can't retrieve information fast enough to accommodate something like a flight simulator with digitized video scenery. The display wouldn't run fast enough—or wouldn't be flexible enough—to suit those who won their wings on the top computer- and video-game pilot programs. Eventually, this may happen but not

with current equipment.

Systems with relatively little internal RAM, which includes most video-game consoles, suffer more. A computer with one to five megabytes of internal RAM can minimize some access time hold-ups by loading



sections of the game into the machine's internal memory, pausing to reload only when the gamer does something that requires data from another part of the CD.

Slow access also will curb the use of animated digitized video of humans. It doesn't look right on the low-end units, and since most publishers plan to market each of their CD titles across all systems, this will discourage the use of animated video images of people. Sierra is among the companies that have tried "live actors" and cinematic production sets. Announced development plans, however, favor the use of animated illustration.

Another factor that works against games with extensive digitized video is memory capacity. If there are a lot of branches, as in a real-time action contest, the CD runs out of space quickly. This is especially true of some of the systems that lack a lot of internal memory. The smaller the internal RAM, the more frequently the system must consult the disc for information, and that kills continuous fast movement.

CD sound is one of the biggest

selling points, so every game boasts a complete music score, and most have extensive sound effects and digital speech. The characters in *Mixed-Up Mother Goose* (Sierra On-Line) speak any of several languages, lip syncing perfectly with the on-screen visuals.

Since publishers know consumers expect thrilling sound in CD games, it has a high priority in product development. Fortunately, it is easy to program and doesn't fill a lot of space on the disc.

Graphics are another story. The programming time and memory requirements for the eye-popping CD images seems to have become the most significant factor in CD game development. The first wave of CD titles, crafted in Japan, have only rudimentary action and strategy, because the audiovisual effects don't leave much room. Better hardware will ultimately help remedy this problem, but today it's a large factor.

Does that mean CD will be a bust? I don't think so. It won't be long before ever-creative programmers have learned the new medium's technical tricks, and another generation of hardware will eventually eliminate some, if not all, of the current disadvantages of CD.

CD will also be great for data-intensive products, such as electronic board games, military simulations, statistical sports simulations and "activity toys." These categories will flourish as never before, because they capitalize on the strengths of the new medium.

Games built on real-time interaction won't benefit nearly as much from CD, but publishers won't abandon these time-tested favorites. Their popularity guarantees a good supply of shooters, simulators and arcade-style sports.

CD is poised to revolutionize electronic gaming by the middle of the 1990s. We're going to get some terrific new entertainments, but there's still going to be lots of room for further improvement.

I promise to put the crystal ball away next month when *Inside Gaming* takes a look at one of the most important and controversial trends in game content: Games for adults. ♀

If you're really clever, just by reading the title of this column you might glean some idea of what games I'm covering this month—or maybe not. As promised, here are three Game Boy and one Lynx game reviews.

Hyper Lode Runner

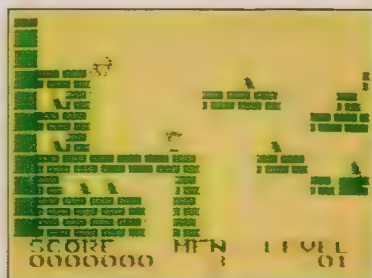
Bandai for the Game Boy

Lode Runner, the Coyote's after you...Whoops! That's not right! But every time I hear *Lode Runner*, the *Road Runner* cartoon theme song runs through my head. An understandable mistake, given the similar nature of the titles. Anyway, even though you won't find Wile E. Coyote in this game, there is a small parallel to the *Road Runner* cartoons—namely that you, as the "Lode Runner," must run around and avoid falling into the clutches of your enemies.

Hyper Lode Runner is an updated adaptation of the classic Brøderbund computer game, *Lode Runner*. Your task in both is the same: Collect all of the gold (the "Lode" in question) on each level in order to exit to the next while simultaneously avoiding the pursuing goons who protect—and sometimes carry—the gold.

Your Lode Runner has no real weapon, just a special tunneling laser that can be used to make holes in the brick floors and walls through which you can move or trap enemies. But watch out! These bricks appear to be organic, and after a certain amount of time, they seal up. If an enemy is in a hole when it closes, he's eliminated (but quickly replaced). If you are in the hole when it closes up...well, you remember that crash diet you were going to start? You won't need it now.

Each level is both an arcade-type contest and a sort of puzzle. You have to try to distract or trap your enemies so they're out of your way, and at the same time try to reason just how to get at that one pile of gold that seems impossible to reach. When you've collected all the gold on the current level, an exit ladder appears, allowing you to go on to the next level. If you've collected all the gold you can see but no exit appears, chances are one of your enemies is carrying the last lode. In such a case you'll have to risk life and limb to lure the enemies into holes so that the one(s) carrying the gold will drop it, and you can



Bandai's *Hyper Lode Runner* is an updated adaptation of Brøderbund's computer classic *Lode Runner*.



The Hyper Heiankyo Boxing Paperboys

by
MAURICE MOLYNEAUX

complete the level.

If you've played *Lode Runner* before, you'll be instantly familiar with *Hyper Lode Runner*. The key difference lies with the Game Boy version's graphics, which are much more detailed than the "stick figures" on the classic computer game. The bad news is that with these new graphics, since everything is bigger and more detailed, you can't see the entire level at once, and it's therefore difficult to coordinate your moves relative to your enemies.

One notable feature, common to all versions of this venerable game, is that it includes a playfield builder that allows you to create your own levels. On the com-

puter versions this added a lot of life to the game. Players could keep coming up with new levels and thus render the game "endless." The Game Boy version has this feature, but it's limited because the cartridge can store only eight player-made levels, and when you turn the Game Boy off—poof!—all your levels go to electron heaven, and you have to create new ones next time you play. A battery backup for storing user levels would have been greatly appreciated.

I like *Hyper Lode Runner*. But once, just once, I wish I could turn that tunneling laser away from those bricks and onto my enemies and cry, "Take that!"

Heiankyo Alien

Meldac for the Game Boy

Something about this game's premise really smacks of an old folk tale. You know, the old nonDisney folk tales that were full of really bizarre concepts and downright twisted imagery. How many of you remember that, despite what cartoons show us, in the traditional version of *Little Red Riding Hood* the wolf actually ate Red, and the Woodsman had to cut the wolf open to get her and Grandma out? Not pretty.

Heiankyo Alien has that same weird "folk" flavor to it. Here's the story: 1,000 years ago, back in the Heian Age, the city of Kyo, Japan, was invaded by human-devouring aliens. A *kebiishi* (knight) was entrusted to defend the city, but he had no weapons. So, with only a shovel to aid him, he moved through the city, avoiding aliens while digging trap holes in the roads. When an alien fell into the hole, the *kebiishi* had to quickly bury it before it could claw its way back out. He saved Kyo by literally burying the aliens alive!

In *Heiankyo Alien* you play the part of the *kebiishi*, running around the streets of Kyo, digging holes and burying aliens. The joystick moves your *kebiishi* through the streets. Press the "A" button a few times to dig a hole. When an alien falls into a hole, or you decide you don't need that hole—or it's in your way—pressing the "B" button a few times fills it in. When an alien falls in, start shoveling! The aliens can and will climb out if you don't start burying them right away.

Unfinished holes have the effect of momentarily slowing down aliens that step in them, but the thrashing of the alien escaping such holes fills them.

The game pack contains two versions of the game; the "old" and "new" versions. Of these, the old game looks like something out of the prehistoric days of

continued on page 132

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COMPUTER

GAME REVIEWS

Second Front: Germany Turns East

STRATEGIC SIMULATIONS INC.

Versions: Amiga (\$59.95),
IBM PC (\$59.95)

| SOUND/MUSIC N/A | | | | | | | | | | |
|-----------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|
| GRAPHICS | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| PLAYABILITY | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| OVERALL | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |

Long-term war-game aficionados fondly remember Gary Grigsby's last foray to the Eastern steppes, *War in Russia*. *Second Front: Germany Turns East*, a direct descendent of that classic, has been upgraded to take advantage of PC technology. Like its predecessor, *Second Front* places logistics and resource management at the heart of the game. Players must consider a myriad of factors from factory production to individual unit readiness and fatigue. However, the model allows ruthless commanders to demand and get more from their troops than could reasonably be expected in actual combat.

The game offers four scenarios: Campaign 1941, Campaign 1942, Moscow and Stalingrad. The natural inclination is to start with the 1941 scenario and compare one's efforts with the historical outcome. This is viable, but capable orchestrators of the German Blitzkrieg tactics will find the war over in early 1942. This is the time when the first units of Allied equipment showed up via the Murmansk convoy runs. Consequently, many of the problems faced by the Wehrmacht later in the war, including the need to balance forces between the East and the West, never come into play.

Six separate campaigns, with the player commanding the Axis, ended in complete victory no later than March of 1942. Historically, this would have virtu-

ally ensured a much longer war and possibly a negotiated peace with Hitler. Fortunately, the other scenarios were included to allow players some new challenges, or the game would grow old rapidly.

There is some doubt about the efficiency of the computer opponent. It seems more effective on the defensive than the offensive, but one should not, regardless of experience, be able to win the war in the East on the first try out of the box. Part of this involves the anomaly mentioned previously.

As the Wehrmacht commander, victory involves simple tasks. First, establish unquestioned air superiority by fly-

ing every mission possible each turn. Soviet airframes are vastly inferior until lend/lease equipment starts to appear.

Second, maintain the offensive in all turns except during rain or a blizzard, regardless of your own troops' readiness levels. Herein lies the artificiality: Some units start and remain on the front line, in contact

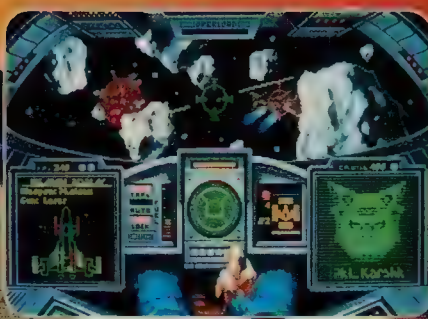
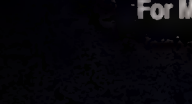
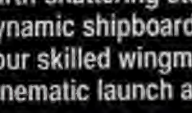
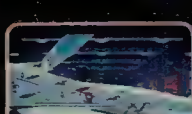
with the enemy throughout the campaign. Their readiness is less than 20%, but they are still capable of shattering and capturing Soviet formations of lesser combat value. Thus, by pushing north toward Moscow and Leningrad, as opposed to south toward Stalingrad, it is easy to capture those cities and let Gorki win the game.

Once Moscow falls, usually the first of the three cities to do so, the Soviets have immense problems reinforcing and coordinating their forces. Their losses mount and the inevitable decline of their will to resist follows soon after.

There are a number of good features to the game, despite the aforementioned problems. Individual leaders are rated in their command skills and act accordingly during assaults, reinforcing



SSI's *Second Front: Germany Turns East* will allow the computer gamer to manipulate the level of detail for combat reports.

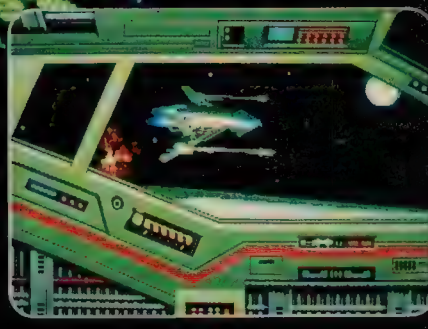
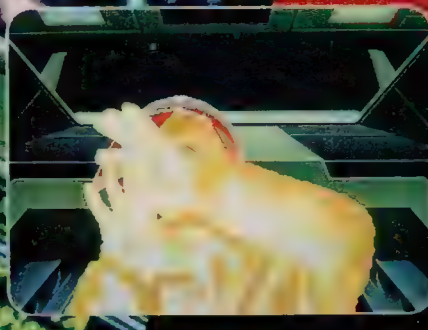


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The game allows the player to manipulate the level of detail for combat reports, from individual squad and plane casualties to just a summary report at the end of the turn. One disappointment was the lack of a comprehensive casualty screen that summarized the others at the completion of a campaign.

—Ed Dille

Bridge 6.0

ARTWORX

Versions: Amiga (\$39.95), Apple II (\$39.95), Apple Iigs (\$39.95), IBM PC (\$39.95), Macintosh (\$39.95)

| | | | | | | | | | | | |
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| SOUND/MUSIC | N/A | | | | | | | | | | |
| GRAPHICS | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | |
| PLAYABILITY | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | |
| OVERALL | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | |

This is a true game, as opposed to a tutorial program. *Bridge 6.0* will not teach the basics of bridge. Artworx markets another product, *CompuBridge*, that is quite capable of accomplishing that task.

The screenshot shows a game interface for 'Sushi'. At the top, a 'Control' bar contains a '3D' button and a 'Help' button. The main play area is a 10x10 grid. A 3x3 green square is highlighted in the center of the grid, covering the cells from row 4 to 6 and column 5 to 7. The grid contains various symbols, including numbers (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10) and letters (A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H, I, J, K, L, M, N, O, P, Q, R, S, T, U, V, W, X, Y, Z). The 'SUSHI player' label is visible at the bottom left.

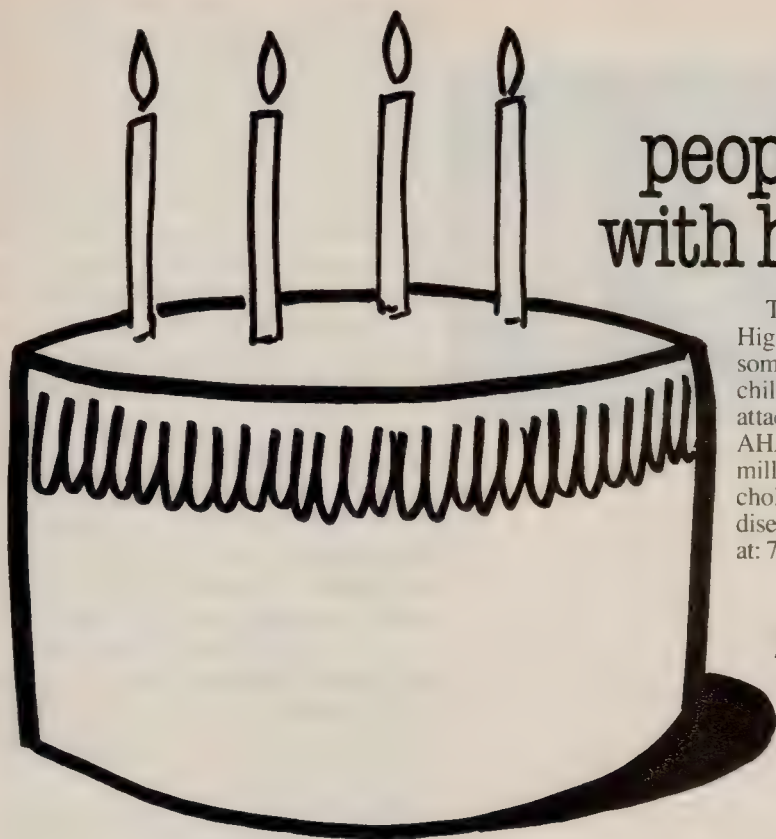


request an opening hand that contains a minimum of 13 high-card/distribution points. Taking this option one step further, players may specify exactly how many points they will receive, up to a maximum of 25. (Owners of slower machines should eschew requests above 20, or the random generator may take some time to find a proper hand.)

Bridge 6.0 uses the Standard American, five-card major bidding system. The program also recognizes the Blackwood and Stayman conventions of play. Once the cards are dealt, the program automatically sorts in descending order and displays the player's hand in suits. Bids are entered from the keyboard, and the program can suggest a proper bid or automatically bid for the player, if requested. The program can also play out the hand automatically, if desired.

It is always possible to review the last trick, but nothing prior to that. Once a hand is completed, players may opt to display all the cards and replay the hand with foreknowledge of the distribution. One also may claim or concede the remainder of the tricks during a hand if the situation permits. Scoring is handled automatically and, when in rubber bridge mode, partial scores are accounted for in the bidding process.

Bridge is a simple trump game with many complex rules built around it. As such, one enjoyable aspect of playing is catching others in irregularities and imposing penalties. Also, human opponents tend to bid out on a limb on occasion, which the computer will never do. The problem is, *Bridge 6.0* suffers from



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a lack of personality. This program could have benefitted from the introduction of varied play styles into the artificial intelligence.

Nevertheless, *Bridge 6.0* is an enjoyable offering that can challenge enthusiasts of all skill levels.

—E. D.

Artworx
1844 Penfield Road
Penfield, NY 14526
(716) 385-6120

Revolution '76

BRITANNICA SOFTWARE

Versions: Apple IIs (\$49.95),
IBM PC (\$49.95)

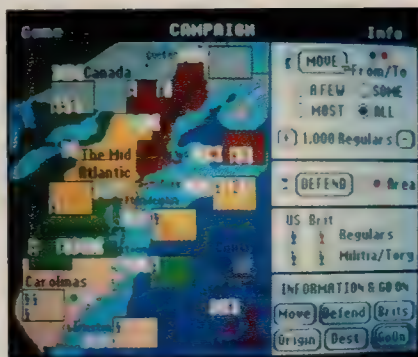
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| PLAYABILITY | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| OVERALL | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |

Most people find history incredibly boring. While realizing they should know about the world's past, most see history as simply a recitation of dates and facts. Britannica Software is doing its part to dispel this myth with their recent release, *Revolution '76*, a game that focuses on the American Revolution. The player is placed in the director's chair, conducting various actions of the rebelling colonies, beginning with the colonial uprising in 1775 against the English crown.

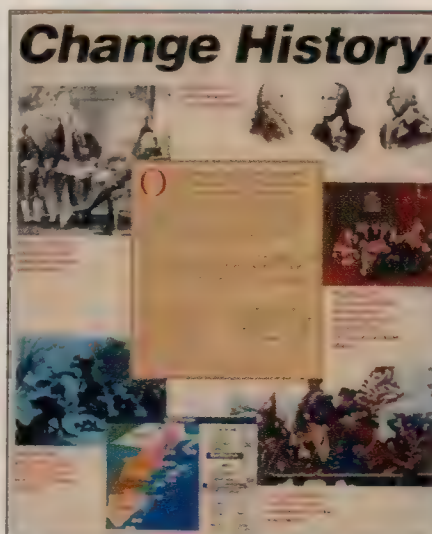
Revolution '76 is divided into a series of turns representing each year of the rebellion. Each turn is further divided into several phases that control the different aspects of the game. Some of these include assigning leaders, raising armies, setting tax rates, building naval forces and carrying out international diplomacy.

In addition to the military implications of each decision, various factions within the colonial congress, both geographical and ideological, will attempt to encourage the player to be more favorable to their cause. Many complaints can be, and often must be, ignored. But ignoring too many complaints may alienate the factions from the player's government and cause problems in managing the fledgling country.

After the choices for each phase of



In *Revolution '76*, by Britannica Software, the player is cast as the commander of the rebellious colonies.



the turn are made, the results are shown to the player. The more successful the outcomes are, the more prestige the player gains, and the more likely other countries are to help out the former colonies. The years pass until one side takes over all the provinces and cities, or when both sides agree to the same level of diplomatic settlement. This can range from unconditional surrender of all rebel forces to unlimited rights for the newly founded country to expand into all British territories in North America.

Naturally, the British start out insisting on surrender, but the more successful the U.S. forces are, the greater their willingness to accept a higher level of settlement. American diplomatic and military successes can also speed along the peace negotiations. This could possibly cause the ruling party in England to be overthrown, bringing to power a much more sympathetic group that will quickly seek peace.

Many different screens are used during game play. Most use geographical information, such as a map of the colonies that contains icons for regular troops and militia on the left side of the screen. The available menu choices are found in their own area on the right side of the screen. The other main screen shows all the congressional representatives in a *Hollywood Squares* fashion, allowing them to be assigned to any of the various different jobs that must be staffed in the new government.

Revolution '76 will take quite a while to master. While the basic game mechanics are fairly simple, figuring the exact interaction of the different elements will take repeated attempts before you are fluent. The built-in randomness of *Revolution '76* makes each game a new experience.

The game does have a few shortcomings. The graphics on the PC are blocky in appearance. Though they are legible, they are not up to state of the art and could use some improvement. The sound is limited to confirmation of clicks on various parts of the window. A mouse is required for the program, a potential limitation. While it works fairly smoothly, the mouse driver used can be a bit jumpy and requires a bit of adjustment to use properly.

In spite of these limitations, *Revolution*



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tion '76 is a fine product. Not only does the program teach some of the factors that influenced the United States' early life, but game play can be quite engrossing as the player attempts one more time to lead America to independence.

—R. Bradley Andrews

Britannica Software
345 Fourth St.
San Francisco, CA 94107
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Tunnels of Armageddon

CALIFORNIA DREAMS

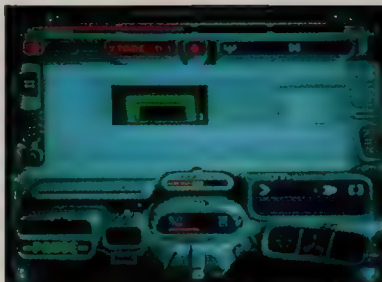
Versions: Amiga (\$39.95), Apple
IIGs (\$39.95), IBM PC (\$39.95)

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| SOUND/MUSIC | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| GRAPHICS | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| PLAYABILITY | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| OVERALL | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |

The witty Truman Capote once chatily described pop artist Andy Warhol as "a Sphinx without a secret." *Tunnels of Armageddon* is a similar sort of proposition; a game one keeps playing long after the boredom threshold has been reached, simply because one can't believe there isn't something better waiting around the corner. Eventually, however, even the most tenacious player reaches the point where they ask "Is that all there is?" To which we respond, "Yup."

The documentation sets up the context of this game at great length. What it boils down to is navigating a craft, the *Hermes*, through a series of 20 tunnels comprising five four-stage zones, in order to save the universe. The tunnels are configured out of three segment types: short, moderate and long. The shorter the segment, the tougher it is to navigate through. Within the tunnels are a variety of objects, some dangerous, others helpful, and there are generators to be destroyed, guardians to kill and bonus weapons to acquire.

That's it, gang: a seemingly endless run through a crudely rendered tunnel system. The graphics, with the excep-



Tunnels of Armageddon is a generic arcade blastathon that should appeal to gamers who enjoy lightninglike play speed.



tion of the Hermes HUD, are reminiscent of C-64 games of half a decade ago. The generators, guardians and bonus objects are rendered as simple icons, and the sound effects are mediocre, at best. The worst is the pig squeal that is emitted every time the gamer fires an ammo burst.

The chief virtue of *Tunnels of Armageddon* is its lightninglike play speed. Gamers who enjoy their computer games best when they move quickly should enjoy this arcade blastathon. There is also a game-save feature, and the program randomizes the tunnel configurations so they can't be memorized.

The bottom line, however, is that *Tunnels of Armageddon* is purely generic product, destined for the discount bins almost from its conception. In short, there is no light at the end of these *Tunnels*.

—Bill Kunkel

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Links

ACCESS

Version: IBM PC (\$59.95)

| | | | | | | | | | | |
|-------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|
| SOUND/MUSIC | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| GRAPHICS | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| PLAYABILITY | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| OVERALL | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |

Links, the latest in state-of-the-art golfing from Access Software (creators of *Leader Board* and *World Class Leader Board*), should appeal not only to inveterate computer duffers, but to all fans of electronic entertainment. The VGA (and MCGA) graphics used to simulate every nook and cranny of the Torrey Pines Golf Course are among the most breathtaking ever seen on a computer monitor. From the Pacific Ocean, which bounds the course to the west, to the mountainous northern fringes, every aspect of *Links* is replicated in stunning detail. More golf courses will be forthcoming.

As for the actual golfing, the on-screen duffer appears in the traditional middle foreground, just above the sophisticated user interface, shooting into

the distance. The interface contains not only the pertinent information—hole, par, distance from pin, wind direction and strength, club, etc.—and a swing meter, but also permits such options as stance adjustment and ball positioning. It even overlays a grid over an area of the course to make the lie more obvious. Gamers can determine the type of shot they want to take, view the course from a top-down view and then rotate and redraw their perspective without recourse to a secondary screen.

Players, complete with their characteristics (male/female, pro/amateur, etc.) and preferences, can be saved to disk, along with games in progress. The user can fine-tune the number of holes to be played, set the skill level and even take practice swings. There's also a driving range and a putting and chipping green for more arduous practicing.

The only real problems with *Links* relate directly to the amount of visual information contained in its program. Expanded/extended memory is a real must to enjoy this game at optimal levels, as is a mouse. Even heavy-duty systems, however, will require a significant period of time to redraw each new course position. Players who want to move along, take a shot, move along, take a shot (and so on) will inevitably be frustrated by these constant delays.

Nevertheless, *Links* is the most visually impressive golf simulation ever produced. It demonstrates considerable thought in terms of both its design and execution and offers golf mavens a level of interaction never before available.

—B. K.

Access Software, Inc.
545 West 500 South
Bountiful, UT 84010
(800) 824-2549



Links, by Access, is the most visually impressive golf simulation ever produced and offers golf mavens a level of interaction never before available.

Test Drive III: The Passion

ACCOLADE

Version: IBM PC (\$59.95)

| | | | | | | | | | | |
|-------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|
| SOUND/MUSIC | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| GRAPHICS | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| PLAYABILITY | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| OVERALL | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |

When the original *Test Drive* was released several years ago, it represented a watershed conceptual development in terms of electronic entertainment. It did phenomenal business in a market saturated with driving games because it offered more than just arcade steering with pretty landscapes. *Test Drive* was the first true driving simulator, offering users a first-person perspective with as many of the frills of modern sports car ownership as possible.

Test Drive's creators, Distinctive Software, Inc. (DSI), produced several related projects for Accolade in the ensuing years (*Test Drive II: The Duel*, *The Supercars*, *The Cycles*, *California Challenge*, etc.) before moving to Brøderbund in 1989.

Test Drive III: The Passion represents Accolade's first non-DSI-produced auto simulator, and, as such, designer Tom Loughry (*Gunboat*, *Steel Thunder*) and his team were obviously under tons of pressure to produce a game up to the standards set by DSI. Rather than fold under the pressure, however, the Loughry team produced a diamond. *Test Drive III* is as remarkable a product in 1991 as *Test Drive* was in 1987—and considering how far state of the art has moved in this field, that is high praise indeed.

The Passion offers users a trio of dream mobiles: a Chevrolet CERV III, Lamborghini Diablo and Pininfarina Mythos. The CERV (Corporate Experimental Research Vehicle) III is the Corvette's "exotic cousin," as the excellent documentation puts it, a cutting-edge vehicle with 650 horsepower, a six-speed automatic transmission and dual steering racks. It goes from 0-60 m.p.h. in 3.9 seconds with a top speed of 225 m.p.h.! On the inside, it resembles something out of *Star Wars*, with a pair of CRTs (one for the ETAK navigational system and the other to display system-analysis readouts), optical sen-



sors, yaw-rate gyros and even "suspension-position transducers." I'm not entirely sure what that last item is, but, obviously, no car should be without one.

The Pininfarina Mythos is a slick Italian job that may be the hottest-looking car to ever grace the blacktop. Its interior, however, is a classicist's dream: red leather, bucket seats and a simple dashboard of orange-on-black analog dials. And what collection of dream cars would be complete without a Lamborghini? The Diablo is an elegant Italian monster machine, a beautiful bullet with an incredible 485-horsepower engine, electronic-port fuel injection, rack-and-pinion steering and a "space age engine-management system, keeping an electronic eye on everything."

Beyond the vehicles themselves, however, *Test Drive III*'s most remarkable feature is the world in which they can be driven. Cruise through farmland, past cities, along beach highways, over railroad tracks (complete with passing railroad), under bridges, through tunnels and by an amazing variety of other reference points. These cars are also equipped with *all* the options. The remarkable graphics blend digitized renditions of each vehicle's dashboard with intricately bit-mapped scenery. Crashes can be viewed via instant replay from any of several viewpoints, including a chase-car view.

Test Drive III is the greatest driving simulator ever produced. It's one thing to supply a user with a mock-up of some hot sports car, and it's another to give that car a realistic and diversified world in which to do its stuff.

—B. K.

Accolade
550 S. Winchester Blvd., Suite 200
San Jose, CA 95128
(408) 985-1700



Test Drive III: The Passion is Accolade's first non-DSI-produced driving simulator.

Silent Service II

MICROPROSE

Version: IBM PC (\$59.95)

| | | | | | | | | | | |
|-------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|
| SOUND/MUSIC | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| GRAPHICS | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| PLAYABILITY | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| OVERALL | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |


The original *Silent Service* was a classic of the 8-bit world, inducted into the Hall of Fame by just about every computer publication of the time. It's somewhat surprising that MicroProse waited as long as they did to introduce a 16-bit sequel. Fortunately, by doing so, they were able to incorporate many of the most recent developments in sound and graphics programming. The end result, *Silent Service II*, is a much jazzier, totally engrossing reprise of the earlier release. It uses many previous game players' suggestions to improve on the original without corrupting or significantly altering the elegance of the base design.

In addition to training missions, single engagements and war patrols, players now have the option to select a war career. The player can also start the game from the time of Pearl Harbor or any date thereafter and end at the historical date of Japan's surrender. It is also possible to command any of the submarine types available at the time, from the antiquated S-boats to the improved GATO class. Historical upgrades, such as the addition of SJ radar sets and improvements to torpedo technology, are available at the appropriate dates of conception.

Players select their initial base of operations and an appropriate patrol zone from those available. Players may change bases by ending a patrol at a



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different base. This occurs many times in the beginning of the war because each base is often overrun.

Players on patrol may encounter enemy units anywhere in the Pacific theater, but probabilities increase within the assigned zone. The original *Silent Service* limited enemy ship types to a few merchants and destroyers. *Silent Service II* depicts many varied ship classes: cruisers, battleships (including the Yamamoto) and aircraft carriers.

Originally, MicroProse had visions of recreating the entire order of battle for the Imperial Japanese Navy, but memory restrictions precluded anything more than generic class representation. Within this framework, however, each class is accurately modeled in terms of armament, handling characteristics and visual representation.

To achieve this effect, designers photographed 1/700-scale models of each class and bit mapped a 360-degree perspective to depict what actual submariners view through their periscopes. Each unit is also assigned a point value based on its tonnage (which is variable) and importance, which may be discerned by the number of destroyers and patrol craft guarding it. For example, if one encounters a single merchant with a destroyer screen of five ships, it would probably yield the equivalent point value of an aircraft carrier with only two escorts. These point assignments are far from arbitrary, reflecting the actual significance certain cargos, such as the midnight Tokyo Express runs during Solomon's campaign, actually held.

EGA graphics are above the norm, but VGA owners will see a marked difference. In VGA, the animations of torpedo launches, depth-charge attacks and bit-mapped explosions are beautifully rendered. Owners of 16 Mhz and above machines will also appreciate faster game play; conducting an end-around attack on a large formation traveling at 16 knots still takes some time to set up.

Improved handling of the TDC (torpedo data computer), use of function keys to maneuver within the play structure and four levels of difficulty combine to make *Silent Service II* both easy



Silent Service II uses many previous game players' suggestions to improve on the original without corrupting the base design.

to learn and challenging for the long term. Players earn medals and promotions based on their contribution to the war effort.

Silent Service II leaves no doubt that for once, a sequel will far surpass the success of its' predecessor.

—E. D.

MicroProse
180 Lake Front Drive
Hunt Valley, MD 21030
(301) 771-1151

Flight of the Intruder

SPECTRUM HOLOBYTE

Version: IBM PC (\$59.95)

| | | | | | | | | | | |
|-------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|
| SOUND/MUSIC | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| GRAPHICS | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| PLAYABILITY | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| OVERALL | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |

Fans of Stephen Coonts' bestseller, *Flight of the Intruder*, will find much of the intensity of the book in the new game for the PC. Spectrum HoloByte's translation doesn't set new standards in terms of graphics (it uses standard polygon-fill graphics for all but the cockpits, which are bit mapped), but the program does incorporate a lot of features that set it apart from other flight simulators.

Players act as the guiding force behind an air wing assigned to the USS *Shiloh*, conducting high-tempo operations over North Vietnam during the Linebacker campaign of 1972. A squadron of F-4 Phantom II fighters and a squadron of A-6 Intruder attack planes are available for assignment. Each squadron is manned by individualized aircrews that hold variable proficiency ratings in each of the skills associated with their aircraft: dogfighting, bombing accuracy and radar suppression (Wild Weasel). Thirteen separate operations and over 35 missions are depicted, with the ability to design an unlimited array of others while acting as the CAG (Commander Air Group).

The unique aspects of mission planning and execution revolve around the realistic, cooperative nature in which air assets are utilized. Flight leaders have wingmen, and F-4s fly cover missions for the bombing runs of the A-6s. Chatter and spotting reports of bogeys and SAMs (surface-to-air missiles) are pro-

vided via a dialogue bar at the top of the cockpit. In addition, Red Crown, the call sign for carrier air control, vectors the F-4s to intercept incoming MIGs. Players may jump from one cockpit to another and remain confident that the craft will be flown and fought at the skill level of the assigned crew. This allows adept players to "build up" the crews of their air wing over a period of time in a fashion similar to that used in Lucasfilm's *Battle of Britain*.

Even the most experienced aircrews can have a "bad day," however, so a player may feel the occasional pang of losing a good wingman. When this happens, a "new guy" will be assigned as replacement.

This cooperative framework has also been expanded to allow two players to connect their computers via a null-modem cable. Instead of the head-to-head match that one might expect, the program provides two options. First, players may compete against one another, with each player selecting the aircraft in the group to fly personally, while the other player never knows for certain which bogey is his human opponent. Or, second, players can play together against the computer, one flying an A-6 and the other an F-4, or both flying the same aircraft and acting as each other's wingman. This is the program's most exciting feature. It is easy to envision an application such as allowing users of an on-line service to serve in air wings and receive missions from a SysOp CAG.

Flight of the Intruder is further distinguished from the competition by inclusion of pilot blackouts and redouts due to pulling excessive positive and negative G-forces. Furthermore, the myriad options and wide range of difficulty settings allow the program to challenge expert aviators without excluding novice jet jockeys. It is even possible to act strictly as the BN (bombardier navigator), controlling only the weapons systems and allowing a "more experienced" computer pilot to bring the player to the target and back.

There are two complaints, though, one major and one minor. The first is that the terrain features are singularly



Experience intensity with *Flight of the Intruder*.

undistinguished using the polygon-fill technique. Hopefully, as CD-ROM storage capabilities become more accessible to programmers and consumers alike, this situation can be rectified. Second, the criteria for the awarding of medals, particularly the Medal of Honor, is far too lenient for a simulation of any conflict. Should either of these factors dissuade one from purchasing this product? Absolutely not!

—E. D.

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Super Games Pak

ODYSSEY SOFTWARE

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| GRAPHICS | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| PLAYABILITY | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| OVERALL | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |

It's very hard to improve on classic games. In the software world it's almost suicidal to consider such an attempt. But that's exactly what Odyssey Software did with *Super Games Pak*. The collection houses three takeoffs on popular arcade games. "ByteMan" brings to mind *Pac-Man*, "JailBreak" reflects *Arkanoid/Breakout* and "Deathbots" takes inspiration from *Berserk*.

Now why would anyone want a collection of these games when they might already have the originals? Maybe because of the excellent graphics, sounds, animation and the frenetic action in each of the titles, that's why! Odyssey Software is a brand-new company, and if *Super Games Pak* is any indication, any original games they introduce should be spectacular.

Let's start off with ByteMan, which has so much variety in its 32 levels that it easily beats the original concept. In ByteMan, the player moves a bit-chomper around a circuit board in order to eat up the bad data bits and avoid circuit-board creatures. The game moves quickly and is engrossing enough to keep the player busy for a long time. The addition of power bits that slow down the ByteMan and a scrolling play-field keep the action interesting. Plus, the music and all-too-familiar digitized sound effects are great.

JailBreak quite simply blows *Arkanoid* out of the water. There are all of the expected power pills contained in the bricks plus a few new surprises. The nicest feature of JailBreak is the level editor. Anyone can design up to 100 levels per game and save them to disk as quickly as he can think them up. *Super Games Pak* would be worth the price of admission for JailBreak and the level editor alone.

Deathbots is the crowning achievement of *Super Games Pak*. The goal of

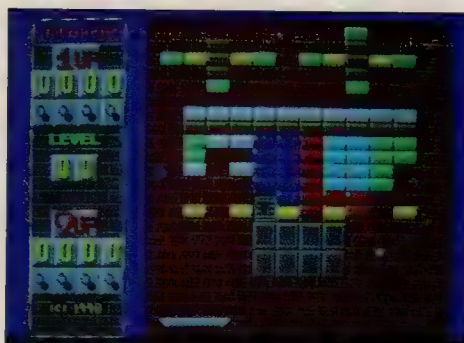
this overhead maze game is to make it to the sixth level of a compound in order to destroy the gamma bomb that could level a continent. Blocking the way are a number of different robots and a super robot at the end of each level. To help, there are a lot of guns, rifles, grenades and health packs strewn throughout the rooms. It's very easy to play Deathbots, but getting to the final level is another story altogether.

Each of the games in *Super Games Pak* should give anyone a good dose of arcade action. In all cases, the graphics are superb, even the screens between levels in ByteMan and Deathbots. Still more impressive are the music and audio. There have never been so many sound effects in one package before. The designer had a field day with his recorder, collecting sounds varying from gunshots to the *William Tell Overture*. *Super Games Pak* is an outstanding games collection and a great example of

what a computer can do when pushed to its limits.

—Russ Ceccola

Super Games Pak, by Odyssey Software, is a collection of three outstanding arcade-style games: ByteMan, JailBreak and Deathbots.



Odyssey Software
P.O. Box 367
N. Eastham, MA 02651
(800) 323-9421

DinoWars

DIGITEK SOFTWARE

Versions: Amiga (\$39.95),
Commodore 64 (\$29.95),
IBM PC (\$39.95)

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|-------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|
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| GRAPHICS | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| PLAYABILITY | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| OVERALL | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |

DinoWars uses an exciting roster of ingredients to create one of the most original arcade strategy games currently available. There are eight different dinosaurs and five game boards. These are augmented by an encyclopedia for real facts and figures. In addition to the reality-based creatures, the player can alter dinosaur statistics and custom design a team.

DinoWars has three distinct parts that

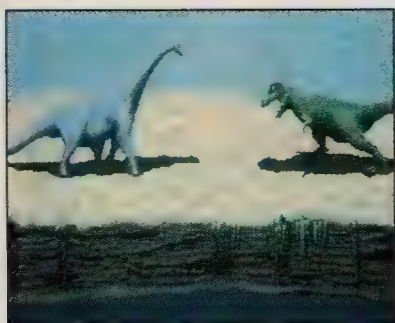
work independently of one another: *DinoWars* (the strategic battle game), the arcade battle sequence and the encyclopedia. Each part contains excellent graphics, digitized sounds and smooth animation.

The *DinoWars* strategic game takes place in one of five different play environments. The player moves dinosaurs through either a river or jungle setting, near a volcano, in the desert or on a traditional chess/checkers board.

Each side has 17 squares that can contain dinosaurs and one place for the opposing team's egg. The object of the game is to either kill all the opposing dinosaurs in battle or capture your team's egg and bring it back to your side of the game board. Each dinosaur follows preset or user-defined statistics that control movement and strength. This feature, coupled with the option to choose the dinosaurs on your team, provides many game variations. Statistics can be saved to disk so a player's favorite game setup can be recalled at any time. *DinoWars* is worth the money for this part of the program alone.

The battle sequence arcade game is nothing more than the same sequences from the strategy game, with the added challenge of scoring and time limit. If a player defeats the opponent in a certain amount of time and the score is high, it's posted to the high-score list. In any case, play continues until the target score is reached or time runs out, whichever comes first. The player can adjust these limits. The nice part about the arcade segment of *DinoWars* is that the player(s) chooses the dinosaur he or she wants to use from the eight types in the game. This is good practice for the battle sequences of the strategy game.

The final section is the encyclopedia, a nice way to learn a little more about dinosaurs and their history. There are 15 squares for the player to explore, ranging from continental drift to fossilization. Animation and colorful graphics illustrate and emphasize the information. Digitized pictures are used in one section, and in all of the dinosaur choices, the respective reptile disintegrates into its skeleton as you read the text. The encyclopedia is the cherry on the top of this delicious game.



The three parts of *DinoWars* may be enough to satisfy any gamer, but the elements that will keep players coming back for more are the graphics and sound. Both are excellent. Most dinosaur sounds in the game were sampled from "big lizard" science-fiction movies and sound great when the volume is high. The graphics are even more impressive. Dinosaurs stand as high as two-thirds of the screen in battle sequences, and all pictures are colorful and highly detailed.

The backgrounds for the battle sequences in the strategy game are especially nice. There are a lot of them, and they reflect the location of the battle in the game environment.

This unusual program from DigiTek should get a lot of awards this year. It's the best dinosaur game ever.

—Russ Ceccola

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CIRCLE #154 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

I never cease to be amazed at the high quality of questions that you guys bombard me with month after month. There are so many great questions coming in day in and day out, it sometimes seems like the Doc could take over the entire magazine and *still* not have enough space to get to everything!

The following is a classic example of the high quality of *Game Doctor* Q's. It will presumably be followed by a classic example of the high quality of *Game Doctor* A's, but I can't be so sure of that.

question

I seem to remember a letter in your column a few issues back that essentially asked: If 32-bit systems are on the way, then why not wait for them to come out? You responded that there could be 32-bit systems, but only on HDTVs. My question is, if that is the best "normal" TVs can do, why don't the objects in today's best video games look more like real objects on TV broadcasts? Instead you can still see individual "dots" easily.

—Jason M. Daugherty
Springfield, Illinois

answer

This is a great question, but I'd like to elaborate a little on what Jason is actually asking. First, let me quote from the response you refer to, from the July '90 issue of VIDEOGAMES & COMPUTER ENTERTAINMENT: "Sega, at least, vehemently denies that it is even considering the possibility of jumping to a 32-bit CPU-based system. 'The technology has reached the point,' explained one of Sega's technical-support people, 'where we've run up against the limitations of the TV set in terms of the image it is capable of producing.' The Sega spokesman hinted that HDTV (high-definition TV) may represent the next major leap forward in video-game technology."

This is not to say that greater resolution is not obtainable on current screens; obviously, we see photographic resolution on our TV sets every day. The point the Sega spokesman was making was that perhaps video-game technology has reached the point of diminishing



GUIDANCE THROUGH THE JUNGLES OF ELECTRONIC GAMING

by
the Game Doctor

returns in terms of current TV technology. In other words, even going to a 32-bit processor may be unlikely to generate photographic resolution on non-HDTVs. With HDTV, however, that additional processing power could be maximized; with existing TVs, the vast majority of the system's power is devoted to producing graphics.

Whether or not video-game manufacturers will produce a 32-bit—or a 64- or even a 128-bit—game system for existing TV sets may not be the crucial question. The *real* question may be, will the additional processing power be worth the cost?

question

Hello and congratulations on a very successful column in VG&CE! My question concerns the Genesis, TurboGrafx-16 and SMS. Why is it that I see more SMS translations for the TG-16 than the Genesis—Games like *Dragon's Curse* (*Wonder Boy III*), *R-Type*, *Y's*, *Space Harrier* and *Vigilante*, that were hits on the SMS? This doesn't make sense. Most of them are original Sega games (with the exception of *R-Type* by Irem). I realize that in Japan, cross-licensing is much easier than it is here, but one would think that Sega would reserve the rights to create some of these games for the Genesis.

Please help me understand Sega's reasoning.

—Jesse Speicher
Boswell, Pennsylvania

answer

I was with you, Jesse, right up until your last sentence. We can talk about licensing, and we can talk about cross-licensing, but when you start asking me to help you understand the reasoning of a video-game manufacturer, well, you're simply asking too much. Sega's decisions frequently leave me with a limp jaw. In the case of the games you refer to, however, the answer is simple.

Every company has its limitations and priorities. There are only so many games that can be developed, packaged and marketed by any company in a given period of time. Some will get the go-ahead and others won't. That's just the way of things.

Then there's the questionable practice of producing "deluxe" versions of existing hits on second-generation game systems. Just because a game was successful on the Sega Master System is no guarantee that gamers will want to repurchase it for the Genesis. Sega seems to feel, with good reason, that it is better off presenting non-SMS games on the Genesis.

The Genesis and SMS markets are somewhat different and actually appeal to different audiences. The Genesis, of course, has greater sound and graphic capabilities than the SMS, making a wider range of potential game types. Then there's the fact that trends in gaming change so quickly that last year's hit is often this year's also-ran.

So, if Sega of Japan has a property that someone wants to license, and

Q & A QUICKIES

- To Robert Rhodes of Salem, Oregon, the address for *RePlay* magazine is P.O. Box 2550, Woodland Hills, CA 91365. Yearly subscriptions are \$80 in the U.S. Keep the faith, Robert.
- TurboGrafx-16 CDs are *not* compatible with CDTV, Macintosh, PC or any other type of CDs. S. Gill of Brampton, Ontario, but the NEC CD drive is a fully functional audio CD player.
- Thanks to Steve Witzel of Access for the excellent *Countdown* hint book; it was a big help.

neither Sega Japan or Sega of America have any interest in producing that game, then why not sign the deal? Obviously, Sega doesn't expect any of the titles you mentioned to be system-sellers for the TurboGrafx-16.

question

On several occasions, I have noticed video games used as part of the plot development for a movie or TV show. These games, however, failed to appear on the commercial market. Have you seen any signs of the amazing game that was used to recruit the starman *The Last Starfighter*? The other game I had hopes [of finding] was the one that young Emilio Estevez finally defeated in the movie *Nightmares* (something like *The Lord of Battle*).

—Joel A. Ortiz "Viper"
Modesto, California

answer

Sometimes the games are real,

Viper, but more often they are not games at all, but simply graphics demos, designed to look like games. I haven't seen the film *Nightmares* but will make an effort to find it. Anyone out there familiar with this game?

question


In the beginning, I had the obligatory Atari 2600. Then I got the ColecoVision. I had an assortment of table-top electronic games, and I subscribed to several video-game magazines. Then, it seemed, all of the magazines went under or changed formats. Simultaneously, the Atari, Coleco, Intellivision, etc., fell into obsolescence along with the table-top games.

Recently, however, with the emergence of the NES and other systems, video games have come back into vogue. What caused this fall of the electronic-gaming empire, and what brought it back? Or was it all my imagination?

—Rob Kelly
Wilmington, Delaware

answer

It wasn't your imagination, Rob, that's for sure. Of course, to answer your question properly would require a *Game Doctor* column the size of a book. Put briefly, however, when Atari attempted to move its audience up from the 2600, it failed. Meanwhile, the 2600 market was glutted with bad software. Retailers who suspected all along that video games were a fad walked away from the market. It wasn't until Nintendo demonstrated faith in the home video-game market that consumers had the opportunity to prove those retailers wrong.

Many industry observers anticipate a similar "glut" in the NES software market, but most doubt the shakeout will produce a similar "dark ages" for video games. Nintendo proved that video-game systems are a mass market item in the United States, and, while that market will experience peaks and valleys, few expect it to disappear altogether. 

DEPARTMENT OF OLD VIDEO GAMES

Got the following letter from Jim Redd, owner of Pleasant Valley Video:

Hi, I noticed in the October issue that readers are writing in trying to find a source for some of those discontinued, rare and nearly impossible-to-find games for the Atari 2600 and other systems. Well, I believe we can help! We have been finding games like that since 1982 and pride ourselves on having what we believe is the biggest selection of titles for the Atari 2600, 5200, 7800, ColecoVision and Intellivision (over 90% in stock for these systems at all times).

We haven't advertised much in publications up to this point. Most of our business is conducted by direct mail and word of mouth. I have enclosed one of our free price lists. I'm sure you'll have fun looking it over. We have a fairly good stock of most titles listed, but there are some that are currently in very short supply right now.

It was actually some of your columns in that other video-game magazine years ago that got me interested in seeking out what even then were becoming rare titles. For instance, we found and bought out the *entire* pre-production (all 630 pieces) run of an Atari 2600 game called *Off Your Rocker*, by a then-unknown company called Amiga (yep, the *same* Amiga). They were plain black cartridges, since no label, boxes or instructions had ever been printed for them. We made labels and instructions, and I am happy to send you a copy of this rare title for your personal collection! We sold a couple hundred of them to other dealers, but all the *Off Your Rockers* out there came from us.

We also brought out all the remaining inventory of *Texas Chainsaw Massacre* (1,352 pieces) and *Halloween* (1,022 pieces) from Wizard Video. As you will see from our list, we have many titles in stock that game collectors are looking for, including: *Eli's Ladder*, *Bumper Bash*, *Music Machine*, *Master Builder*, *Gas Hog*, *Mangia* and many, many more (yes, we have *Revenge of the Beefsteak Tomatoes* and *Porky's*, which VG&CE reader Gary Phelps mentioned, also)!

About the only thing we had to take off the list was Vec-

trex; it was just too darn hard to find most of the titles, even for me! However, this does not mean that we won't handle it in the future, just not for now.

—Jim Redd
Pleasant Valley Video
8141 Pleasant Valley Road
Camden, OH 45311

Jim isn't kidding when he says his list is complete! The 14-page list of games is chock-full of old treasures, so all you collectors out there should drop him a line, pronto! And Jim, thanks for the games, they will occupy an honored place in the Doc's collection.

Also, on the subject of collectors, old friend Frank M. Polosky (P.O. Box 9542, Pittsburgh, PA 15223) writes to tell us he has a list of old electronic-gaming magazines for sale. Many readers have written in asking how to obtain these magazines, and Frank has a nice selection of *Electronic Games* (my old stomping grounds—later *Computer Entertainment*), *Electronic Fun* (later *Computer Fun*), *Video Games Player* (later *Computer Games*—do I sense a trend emerging here?), *Video Games*, *VideoGaming Illustrated*, *Joystick*, *Computer Gaming World*, *Softalk* and others. So if you're interested in seeing what the electronic-gaming landscape looked like a decade or so ago (or if you have ColecoVision game carts to sell), drop Frank a line!

That about wraps things up for this installment of *Game Doctor*. We'll be back to giving out Prize Packets for the best question in the next issue; we took a few issues off while we replenished our stock of goodies, so the next few packets will have some neat stuff in them. For the benefit of newcomers, a Prize Packet is a collection of buttons, pins, keychains and other game-related geegaws the Doc has acquired in his dozen or so years chronicling the electronic gaming hobby.

Send all your questions, comments and corrections to *Game Doctor*, 330 S Decatur, Suite 152, Las Vegas, NV 89107. We'll see you next month.

COMPUTER STRATEGIES

Becoming the Big Noise in ThunderStrike

LIVE STUDIOS INC.

Versions: Amiga, Atari ST, IBM PC

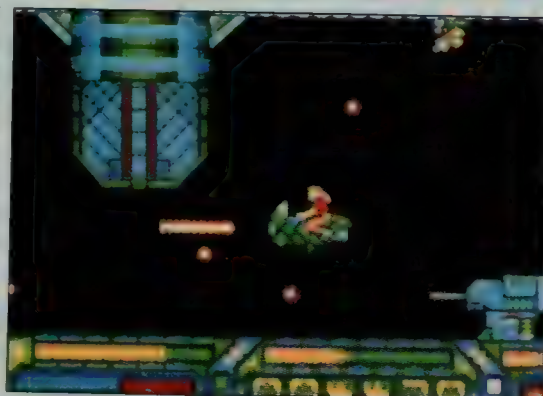
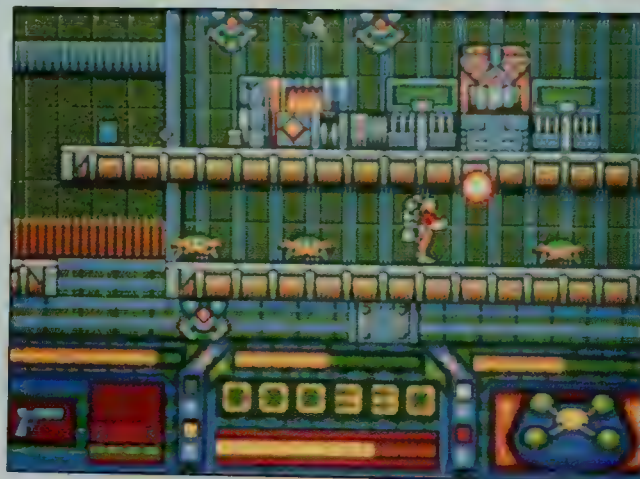
The year is 2238. Throughout the galaxy, people gather by their televisions to witness the annual ground-defense competition hosted by Megacorp Industries. This year Megacorp has a bright young pilot ready to challenge the arena...and guess who that might be?

Start each mission by choosing a control method. If you have a joystick, it's best that you use it. It's much more responsive than a mouse in this simulation. The keyboard is really a last-resort controller, since it is next to impossible to fly by keys.

Once airborne, immediately check the map to get a bird's eye view of all enemy drones and friendly installations. This is also a way to get a moment's rest for tired fingers, because game play is suspended while you're viewing the map.

Most scenarios feature the installations grouped together with the generators positioned around them. Look for the generator closest to the installations, and head for that area immediately. As you approach, the enemy drones will head right at you. The trick here is to stay between the enemy and the installations so they can be shot before they get past you. The instant the enemy generator is in range, fire and destroy it.

Once that's done, quickly turn and head back toward the installations, the drones from the remaining sites will be approaching. Use the map to track their



progress toward your bases. Concentrate on knocking out the saboteurs first; they are your immediate threat. A bold but risky strategy is to actually wait for the saboteurs to attack a base before destroying them. This will usually

reward the patient player with a military hardware pod, which is always a big help.

After the initial drone set is destroyed, head out after the next generator and repeat the process. The most important thing to remember is don't try to take out all of the generators at once. Doing so will result in an abundance of enemy drones getting to the bases—and most likely destroying a good number of them.

Keep in mind that offensive rating is determined by the player's hit ratio. The only way to upgrade the ship is to achieve an acceptable hit percentage. To do so, try not to fire haphazardly. Five shots destroy a generator, so only fire five. Do the same with enemy drones, and the hit ratio will soar.

Most arenas are equipped with black tracks the player can lock into for traveling around the playing field at high speed. These tracks should be used mainly to get back to the bases quickly when they are under attack. The problem with the tracks is that they don't always go the way you want them to. If a track is headed in the right direction, use it. Otherwise, save a turbo or two for those times when speed is of the essence.

—Frank Tetro, Jr.

How to Master Stryx

PSYGNOSIS

Versions: Amiga, Atari ST, IBM PC

Stryx, the follow-up to *Obliterator*, assigns the gamer the task of shutting down an army of rampant robots. Wary of slave labor and short life spans, the droids have risen against their human masters.

The five Dome Cities, the last outposts of life on earth, are now a menagerie of vicious cyborgs determined to end every human encounter with slaughter. The underground tunnels and mines that connect the cities are infiltrated and infested with the robotic freaks.

Into this world comes Stryx—half-man, half-machine—a killer created to combat the metal menace. As Stryx, the player must seek through the maze of platforms for the Lifeforce, a device that controls all vital life functions for the slave robots of the Dome Cities. The device can only be accessed by the use of four Lifeforce keys (red, yellow, green or white). The keys were wrenched from their human keepers and are now scattered throughout the cities, guarded by swarms of sentries.

Victory in *Stryx* can only be achieved with exceptional joystick skills and a good knowledge of the mazes inside the Dome Cities. The game begins in the central city. This city contains a red key that permits access to the next city. A key appears on-screen as a silver box with a square of the appropriate color in its center. Also strewn about the cities are jet packs, which allow limited flight in open spaces and use of a cannon. When you pick up gas cans, fuel is provided for the jet packs.

A meter at the top left of the score display shows the amount of jet fuel remaining in reserve. To the right of this meter are two bars that depict fuel levels for the jet bike and mining craft. A fourth bar below the score represents Stryx's life energy. It's possible to collect fuel or energy past the limits of these meters.

Silver cylinders with colored bands contain ammunition for the pistols and blasters that Stryx recovers. Typically, an ammo unit contains both high- and low-powered shots. The F3 key toggles between these modes. It appears that B1 and B4 use the most powerful ammunition, while B2 and B3 are relatively weak. Occasionally an ammo cylinder will recharge Stryx's sidearm completely.

Circles that flash purple and white or, while in the jet bike tunnels, as brown octagons with crisscrossed bands add to Stryx's life energy. The tunnels between the domes are a good source of energy capsules. If the life meter is low, the gamer can fly back and forth between two cities, capturing brown energy pellets. The game seems to restock these capsules every time Stryx leaves the tunnels, so this is the easiest method of powering-up.

The most important items in the games are the four Lifeforce keys. These are displayed as multicolored rotary dials and are found in the second, third and fourth domes. All four keys must be inserted into the Lifeforce computer before the game can be successfully completed.

Stryx, by Psygnosis, pits the player against an army of rampant cyborgs, in an attempt to save the last remnants of human civilization.

A good player will find as many keys as possible before traveling to the Lifeforce system. One or two trips will tax fuel reserves less than four separate journeys will.

An essential strategy is to study the enemy. Try to learn each robot's moves and patterns of travel. Most guardian robots are lackluster, but a few are dangerous, and precautions should be taken. The Cyborg Assassin, a red trooper with a glowing faceplate, is easily the most dangerous of the mechanical fiends because of his ability to teleport anywhere and attack instantly. Fortunately, the appearances of the assassins can be predicted. Look out for the circle of light that precedes each cyborg's arrival.



The Red Stomper is the largest robot in the game and is also one of the fastest. The Red Stomper fires energy blasts from its arms, which will knock Stryx down if he's in range. To avoid prolonged combat, the gamer should use his high-powered bullets to destroy this brute as quickly as possible.

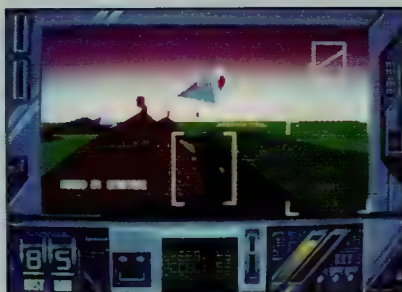
Grey robbies are similar in size to the Red Stomper. These robots are identified by the light bulbs on their heads. The grey robbies can be outrun, but they can catch up with Stryx if he stumbles or is shot.

Mushroom robots, though small, flat and meek-looking, silently sap the player's energy as he darts among them. These robots are always found in groups and can be destroyed by firing at the floor as they march past.

One of the most dangerous points in the game comes when the player switches weapons and equipment. At these moments, try to keep Stryx's back to a wall, and finish as quickly as possible. A cyborg can appear at any moment and knock Stryx out of the weapon's reach.

Another easy way to die is to venture into the Hive, the monstrous cavern found beneath the surface of the planet. At one point late in the game, Stryx is forced into the Hive. Practice control of the mining craft early in the game, using the entrance located in the central city. If the gamer does not acquaint himself with the Hive before attempting to conquer the Dome Cities, Stryx's mission will certainly end in death.

—Derek Godat



video gaming, with stick figure characters and blocks for buildings. In this version it takes longer to dig and fill a hole, and it takes the aliens longer to escape a hole than in the "new" game. Also, the aliens aren't slowed down at all by an incomplete hole. The "new" game features far superior graphics, with distinct alien types, scenery and even special terrain types to further complicate matters.

There is also facility for the Video-Link hookup between two players, allowing two options, "Buddy Mode" (old game) and "Versus Mode" (new game). Personally, I can't see why anybody would want to play the old game, and what irks me is that buddy mode is available only in the old game, and versus mode only in the new. It would have been preferable to have those options in both versions.

That quibble aside, I found *Heiankyo Alien* appealing and intriguing, and I recommend you take a look at it.

Championship Boxing

Activision for the Game Boy

As I stated a few issues back, I really don't like sports video games, because they never seem to really capture the feel of the games they are emulating. I've played video- and computer-game versions of football, baseball, basketball and soccer, among others, and rarely have I ever found one that I liked. Furthermore, I'm going to admit that I don't like boxing, because I just have a problem with a sport where the whole point is to pound on another human being until he can't get up. So, can you guess what I thought of this game?

Surprise! I liked it!

Activision's *Championship Boxing* manages to succeed where most sports simulations fail, because not only does it do a fair job of replicating the action (puff, puff) and feel (ouch!) of boxing, but more important (oof!), it succeeds in being a fun game to play.

The game pak provides you with six fighters to choose from. In single-player



In *Championship Boxing*, by Activision, the player can choose a fighter from a list of six different boxers and then fight his way to the top.

mode, you then pick one of these fighters as your alter ego and must take on each of the five remaining contenders, starting from the weakest to the mightiest. It's tempting to choose "The Champ," as your persona, but more challenging to pick one of the lower-ranking boxers. This might seem an awfully limited selection, but it's not. Each fighter's attributes aren't etched in silicon; you have the option of distributing strength between punch power, speed and stamina. Want some more juice in your punches? You'll have to lower something else.

The boxers are initially seen from a side-overhead view showing the entire ring. But once the contestants get within punching distance, the view switches to a first-person perspective, with your gloves held before you and an outline representing your head. The opposing boxer is seen up close, taking hits, blocking your punches and delivering his own. You can move left and right, throw everything from a right hook to an uppercut and even block, all using surprisingly natural combinations of the joystick and action buttons. Of course, your real concern is to win the match by punching, jabbing and blocking. If you're lucky, you might get to use your devastating knock-out punch. **WHAMMO!**

The game also supports head-to-head contests via Video Link, so you can take out your frustrations on your best "friend."

Paperboy

Atari for the Lynx

After burying aliens alive and getting my head bashed in with some of the aforementioned Game Boy titles, it was kind of nice to have a chance to relax and ride a paper route. What could be simpler? Whoops, what's this? I have to duck cars and go-carts and dogs and signs? Okay, no problem. What? There's more? You mean if I miss delivering a paper to a house, the people there will cancel their subscription? And you mean to tell me that all those nasty people in the gray houses don't have subscriptions, but I have to try and get them to subscribe? How? Free newspapers? How will that help? What?! You mean I have to smash their windows, knock them down and otherwise cause chaos and destruction to convince them to sign up?!

Paperboy, adapted from the arcade game of the same name, is just what I related. You have to make all of your

scheduled deliveries and target nonsubscriber houses with "samples" while simultaneously ducking everything from mailboxes to motor vehicles—even killer pussycats.

No problem. Easy stuff. Look Ma, no hands! Not really. This sidewalk zigs and zags, and there are cars in the driveways and...yikes! I missed the paper box and broke a subscriber's window! Oops, killer kitty on the sidewalk. I'd better duck out



Dodging cars is the least of your worries in *Paperboy*, by Atari. Besides avoiding an array of obstacles, the gamer must maintain enough subscribers to sustain a paper route.

onto the street for a...Yow! Where'd that car come from? I'd better get back on the sidewalk before—Ouch! Darned storm drain. I hope I sold enough papers to pay for repairs to my bike. Whadda ya mean, "Game Over"? Get the idea?

That about sums up *Paperboy*. Each level comprises a "day" on your route, and as days pass, your route gets longer and more complicated and dangerous. Your goal is to keep your current subscribers happy while enticing others to sign up. Failure to maintain enough subscribers or crashing too many times will result in the game's end.

The graphics in *Paperboy* are fair, the music is okay, the game play is all right and the concept has a lot of potential for being really interesting and amusing. But, for some reason it just didn't really get me going. I suspect some really wacky sound effects and funny "crash" animations would have added some of the "punch" that seemed to be missing, but who can say? *Paperboy* isn't a bad game. It seems to be a fairly good game, although it is a bit repetitive. If you liked *Paperboy* in the arcade or on another home system, you'll probably like this version. If you've never played it, I don't know just what to suggest. It didn't really appeal to me. If at all possible, try before you buy.

Next month in this column it's Lynx City. We'll take a peek at the two-player games *Shanghai* and *Robo-Squash* and the up to four-player games *Rampage* and *Zarlor Mercenary*.

Gotta go! So many games, so little time! 🐱

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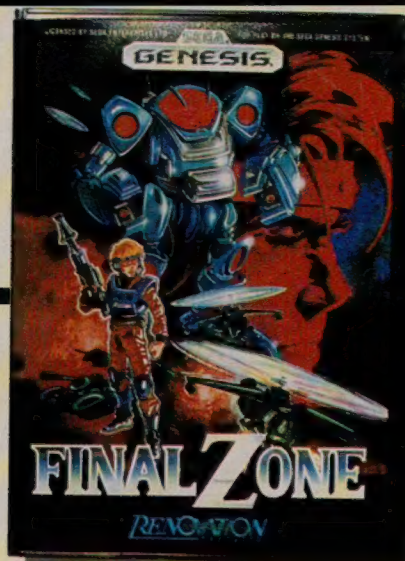
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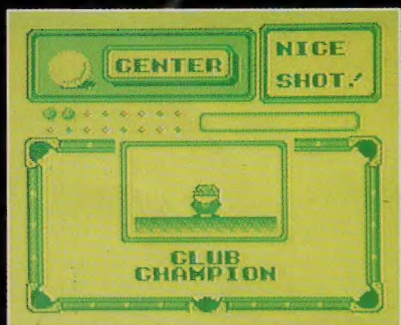
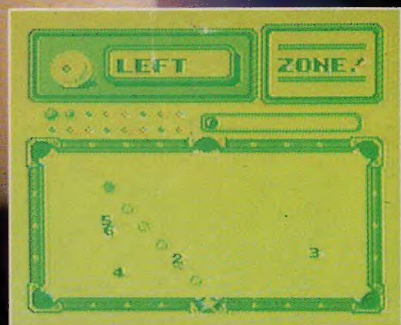
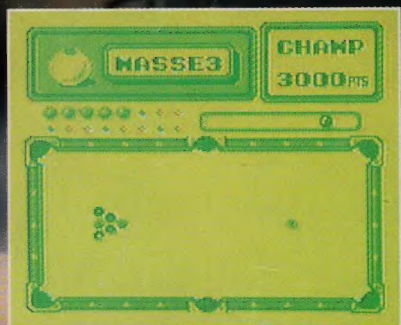
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